



**Annual Report and Accounts for the year  
ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024**

## Chair's report

The choir continued to perform a well-received programme of concerts during the reporting year. Although significant audience numbers have proved hard to achieve in some cases, our three concerts were all attended by warm and appreciative audiences.

Our autumn rehearsals prepared for a return to Chatteris Parish Church on 25th November 2023 for a concert entitled 'Sing Joyfully!' where the principal work for the second half was a performance of the choruses from Brahms' A German Requiem, with a fine piano duet accompaniment provided by Anne Reece and Christopher Moore. A typically wide-ranging set of anthems by Byrd (in the 400th anniversary of his death), Weelkes and Jonathan Dove was interspersed with piano solos by John Ireland played by Anne Reece.

Although we performed ahead of the Christmas Lights switch-on this year, a good-sized audience gave us a warm welcome to this well-appointed parish church which has become a favourite venue once more.

In Spring we moved back to Ely on 9th March 2024 for a return to St Mary's Parish Church, the original home of our predecessor St Mary's Chamber Choir - now renovated to become more adaptable for modern worship and as a performance space. The church is beautifully finished with moveable seating and makes a fine venue for a choir of our size. A large audience enthusiastically received our performance of Dvorak's Mass in D with accompaniment from Cherry, Lindi, Clare, Tim and John – the Quintessential Winds. The band also performed a solo by Nielsen in a first half which included Marenzio's Jubilate Deo, Stanford's Three Latin Motets and contemporary works by Janet Wheeler and Marek Raczynski.

We are also most thankful to members and supporters who 'sourced' and operated the donations-only refreshments in the church hall, much appreciated by all!

For our summer term performance, we travelled further afield to re-visit Suffolk on 22nd June, performing an evening of classic and contemporary choral music in the magnificent space of Holy Trinity Parish Church in Long Melford. Members enjoyed the delights of the town – which included a beer festival and a circus on the day of our visit – and an appreciative audience heard movements from Jonathan Dove's The Passing of the Year, Ola Gjeilo's Unicornis Captivatur and Morten Lauridsen's Sure on this shining night – all works from our existing repertoire – as well as new works to us including Bach's Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden and Brahms' motet Wo ist ein so herrlich Volk. Anne Reece played some beautiful Brahms pieces to provide interludes during the first half.

The brilliantly planned, programmed and executed concerts once again the inspiration and dedication of our leader Matthew Rudd, who attained a significant birthday milestone at the Chatteris concert which was suitably marked with a generous gift from the choir. Matthew's unfailingly positive and encouraging style make him a true friend of a choir he has now been directing - somewhat unbelievably - for 22 years.

Anne Reece is a hugely capable musician and we are very fortunate to have her skills

available to us as rehearsal pianist and concert soloist.

The management committee has now fully adjusted to the new-style CIO requirements which demonstrate proper governance to the Charities Commission. The five original trustees (John, Roger, Liz, Nick and Caroline) continue their work. The principal officers remain the same with John as Chairman, Roger as Treasurer and Liz as Secretary. Nick's focus is on our (often complex!) ICT issues and Caroline is our invaluable expert on governance. In compliance with our new regulations, John and Caroline stood down at the AGM and were duly re-elected. The trustees must make major decisions (e.g. commitment of expenditure) by majority vote and these are beginning to be taken on-line where necessary. All the choir's business is regularly discussed with the full management committee including our co-opted members Helen (music library), Pete and Angela (publicity and marketing). Our committee members and trustees deserve our thanks for the efforts put in 'behind the scenes' to ensure the choir operates smoothly.

In the management committee our discussions focus around forward planning and finance in particular with reference to our charitable role as demonstrated to the Charities Commission. It was also decided to re-establish the re-audition process disrupted by the COVID pandemic and not undertaken for six years. All eligible members attended a re-audition during the Spring. Whilst recognising that this process can be challenging for individuals, the management committee and Director feel it is essential to undertake reviews regularly to maintain our standards of singing and allow for individual one-to-one discussions with the Director. The process will in future take place every three years (with those joining within the intervening period being exempt from re-audition at that time).

As a result of the audition process, our need to maintain good coverage for absences and to ensure balance in multiple-part works which are a feature of our repertoire, it was agreed to publicise a recruitment drive at the end of the 2023-24 season. This generated significant interest and the choir has gained new members through auditions for the 2024-25 season. As part of our charitable focus, we are entering discussions with local singing teachers and musicians around the creation of apprentice-type roles for adult singers just starting out in choral singing.

There have been few personnel changes during the reporting year. Particular mention should be made of our long-standing soprano member Bev Sweet, who has battled serious illness, including months in hospital, during 2023-24. Bev is making great progress and we must thank all choir members who have joined with her many friends and family in supporting her recovery.

The choir is well-positioned financially and has a full programme already in place through to 2026, with much to look forward to. Attracting substantial audiences to view our always exciting concert performances is still the most difficult task and all members need to work together to achieve this – the choir deserves to be heard!

*John Simmons, Chair*

## Charitable objectives

The choir's charitable object, as set out in the Constitution is as follows:

"The objects of the CIO are to advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of choral music in all its aspects by the presentation of public choral concerts in East Anglia; and to make grants to support such general charitable purposes according to the laws of England and Wales as the trustees may in their absolute discretion determine."

### Summary of the main activities undertaken for public benefit:

The activities of the charity are to:

- Perform public choral concerts throughout the year.
- Educate the general public in a wide variety of choral music across the ages both accompanied and unaccompanied including new compositions.
- Provide free or reduced membership costs for the disadvantaged and those in full-time education.
- Provide a wide variety of rewarding volunteering roles to deliver the charity's activities.
- Provide free or reduced-price concert tickets for young people and the disadvantaged.
- Provide occasional opportunities for school children to participate in concerts.

## Musical Director's report

Our Autumn Term concert saw a welcome return to Chatteris Church, where we performed a programme of two contrasting parts. In the first half we marked the 400th anniversary of the deaths of two great Tudor composers, Thomas Weelkes and William Byrd, by singing a selection of their anthems; despite the four centuries that have passed, this remains challenging and engaging repertoire and it was good to work in detail on these pieces. In the second half, we sang the choruses from Brahms' German Requiem, accompanied by piano duet in a new arrangement which put our two fine pianists through their paces just as much as the choir! We look forward to returning to Chatteris in Christmas 2024.

The Spring Term saw us visit St Mary's Church in Ely, and although this was a return to the choir's original home, it was actually the first time in more than two decades that we have sung there. A remarkable building project has transformed this already beautiful church into a warm and spacious venue which both the choir and audience appreciated enormously, and we certainly hope to sing there as a regular fixture. The programme was full of contrasts as always. We often sing music in an eight-part 'double choir' format, but we began this concert with a wonderful motet by Marenzio which divided the choir into three separate choirs, creating exciting 'stereo' effects across the church. Other works included Stanford's three great church motets (Justorum animae, Coelos ascendit hodie and Beati quorum via) and Janet Wheeler's modern 'Homage to Stanford' based on Beati quorum via. Dvořák's Mass in D is a well-loved mainstay of the choral repertoire, thanks to its appealing

melodic writing throughout, but we gave it a fresh take by performing with a new accompaniment arranged for wind quintet.

In the summer term, we ventured further afield, to the magnificent Holy Trinity Church in Long Melford. We sang a varied but challenging programme, with three particularly demanding works: William Harris's double-choir anthem *Faire is the Heaven*, Bach's motet *Lobet den Herrn*, and excerpts from Jonathan Dove's song cycle *The passing of the year*. The choir rose to the challenge splendidly, giving a particularly fine performance to round off another enjoyable season.

It was a pleasure to work with a group of talented instrumentalists over the course of the season, Christopher Moore (piano) and the Quintessential Wind Quintet. Underpinning everything, though, has been our much-loved accompanist Anne Reece; as well as playing for our weekly rehearsals and accompanying us in concerts, she has performed a number of fine piano solos too. She is hugely valued and appreciated by all of us.

The committee have continued to work tirelessly to ensure that the music can happen; none of our concerts would be possible without the hard work which goes into various areas, including finance, administration, venue booking and liaison, publicity, website and mailing lists, music hire, our own music library and lighting. It has been another exciting and successful season - thank you all!

*Matthew Rudd, Musical Director*

## **Treasurer's report**

This report covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024. Ely Consort performed three concerts during the year in Chatteris Church, St. Mary's Church, Ely and Long Melford Church.

Our financial objective is to break even during the year. In broad terms we plan our budgets so that subscriptions will pay for rehearsal and administration costs and ticket sales will pay for on-the-day concert costs and a contribution to the new music commission fund.

The choir operates four bank accounts. Three of these: a current account, a music commission account and a reserve account are unrestricted accounts. The commission account shows money set aside by the Trustees from general funds in case they may wish to commission new works, but has the option to be used for general purposes. The fourth account, the tour account, is a restricted account to cover the cost of occasional singing tours undertaken by the choir. The day to day running costs of the choir are financed through the unrestricted accounts.

In 2024 the choir purchased a SumUp Card Reader which enabled ticket sales to be made both to choir members and at the door by bank card which minimized the handling of cash. Other ticket sales were made online through TicketSource.

The first concert of the season was performed in Chatteris Church on November 25<sup>th</sup> 2023. As in the previous year we agreed that we would provide full financial details of the concert to the church and share any profit made once all costs and ticket sales had been taken into

account. We hoped that this would encourage the church to sell tickets and jointly ensure success of the concert. Ticket sales were 60, which was a little less than expected as a result of the less than optimum November date for a Christmas concert owing to church availability. Nevertheless, the concert made a small profit of £64 and £32 was given to the church as their share of the profit.

The second concert of the season was held in St. Mary's Church, Ely on March 9<sup>th</sup> 2024. This was the first time the choir had performed in St. Mary's Church since its major renovation and the concert and venue proved to be a great success. We sold 81 tickets and the concert made a profit of £200. The choir also funded and sold interval drinks for the first time using the church's alcohol license and this contributed to the overall profit.

Our third concert was held in Long Melford Church, Suffolk on 22nd June 2024. We budgeted for a low-cost concert as we were performing some distance for our normal audience base. The concert was a success and we sold 51 tickets, although these were fewer expected. Nevertheless, we made a profit of £58 and under our profit-sharing agreement we gave £29 to the church as their share of the profit.

At all concerts reduced price tickets were given to those unable to pay for full-priced tickets and free tickets were given to those under the age of 18.

Ely Consort applied to HMRC for Gift Aid for the year 2023-24 and a payment of £980.00 was received in June 2024. Ely Consort CIO made a surplus of £258 for the 2023-24 financial year.

The Trustees agreed to transfer £640.45 from the Reserve Account to the Commission Account to bring the amount in the Commission Account to £2,500 in anticipation of commissioning a new work in the 2024-25 season.

On August 31<sup>st</sup> 2024, the current account contained £249, the commission account contained £2,500, the reserve account contained £7,502 and the tour account contained £0.01. The total current assets of Ely Consort were £10,251 at the end of the year.

The Membership subscription of £140 has been held for two years. However, there has been significant inflation over that period and along with a more ambitious music programme planned for the 2024-25 season the Trustees have agreed to raise the Membership subscription to £150 for the 2024-25 season.

*Roger Hill, Treasurer*

ELY CONSORT CIO

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST AUGUST 2024

Income	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
Subs		5,021		5,064
Concert Receipts		3,175		4,211
Adverts Sponsors		0		80
Music Sales		0		0
Gift Aid / Misc.		1,320		1,724
Interest/Reserve		137		25
		<u>9,654</u>		<u>11,104</u>
less Expenses				
Music Hire/printing		841		683
Rehearsal Pianist		1,950		1,595
Soloists / Orchestra		1,825		2,575
Music Director		1,820		1,650
Venue Hire/Tuning		804		1,390
Room Hire		974		680
Website		0		0
Misc.		551		308
Insurance Fees		259		318
Coach Hire		0		0
Equip / Stationery		372		0
		<u>9,396</u>		<u>9,199</u>
		258		1,905
Commissioned Music		0		0
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		<u>258</u>		<u>1,905</u>

**ELY CONSORT CIO**  
**BALANCE SHEET**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST AUGUST 2024**

	2024		2023	Notes
	£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>				
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Bank Accounts	<b>10,251</b>		<b>9,993</b>	
	<u><b>10,251</b></u>		<u><b>9,993</b></u>	1
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>				
Sundry Creditor	<b>-1</b>		<b>-1</b>	2
	<u><b>-1</b></u>		<u><b>-1</b></u>	
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u><b>10,250</b></u>		<u><b>9,992</b></u>	3
<b>REPRESENTED BY:</b>				
General Fund	<b>9,993</b>		<b>8,088</b>	4
Excess Income Over Expenditure for	<b>258</b>		<b>1,905</b>	5
	<u><b>10,250</b></u>		<u><b>9,993</b></u>	6

**Notes**

- 1 Total of Current, Tour, Commission, Reserve accounts
- 2 Tour account creditors
- 3 Total of Current, Commission, Reserve accounts
- 4 Total of Current, Commission, Reserve accounts
- 5 Surplus/Loss for period
- 6 Total of Current, Commission, Reserve accounts



## **Declaration**

The Trustees declare they have approved the Trustees' Report above.

Signed by the Chair of the Trustees, John Simmons, on behalf of the Trustees:

Signed: ***John Simmons***

Date: ***6<sup>th</sup> November 2024***

## Independent Examiner's report

The Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees of Ely Consort CIO on the accounts from 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024 is shown below.

### Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Independent Examiner

The charity Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which:

- 1) gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements: to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or to which
- 2) in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Robert Andrews

Signed: **Robert Andrews**

Date: **10<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

Address: 3 Swards End, Wickford, Essex SS12 9PB

### Relevant professional qualification:

Fellow of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners

## Reserves Policy

The Accounts show unrestricted reserves of £10,251. Going forward, in accordance with our Reserves Policy, our level of reserves represents some 80% of our 2024/25 budgeted income of approximately £13,000.

We consider that this is sufficient in the event of any uninsured or unanticipated events such as insufficient concert ticket sales to cover venue hires, professional musician costs or uninsured concert cancellation by venue.

## Structure and governance

**Type of governing document:** Constitution

**How the charity is constituted:** Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

**Trustee Selection:** Co-opted

### Trustees:

John Simmons, Chair

Roger Hill, Treasurer

Nicholas Barton

Elisabeth Mellor

Caroline Stanger

It is considered that all Trustees and any others who could be understood to be 'managers' in the activities and affairs of Ely Consort are deemed to be 'fit and proper' persons under the terms of the Finance Act 2010.

### Musical Director:

Mathew Rudd

## Reference details

**Charity Name:** Ely Consort CIO

**Charity Registration Number:** 1194693

**Charity's principal address:** 62, High Street, Haddenham, Ely, CB6 3XB.