



**Annual Report and Accounts for the year
ended 31st August 2025**

Introduction and Charitable Objects

Ely Consort CIO is a Chamber Choir of about 40 voices based in Ely, Cambridgeshire. 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.

Administrative information

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

Charity Name: Ely Consort CIO

Charity Registration Number: 1194693

Musical Director's report

This report covers the period from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025. Ely Consort performed three concerts during the year in Chatteris Church, St. Mary's Church, Ely and Ely Cathedral.

We were pleased to return once again to Chatteris Church for our first concert of the season, where we performed a Christmas programme including two substantial works accompanied by a chamber orchestra, the Ad Hoc Sinfonia. In Haydn's *St Nicholas Mass*, our wonderful guest soprano soloist Elenor Bowers-Jolley was joined by alto (Monica), tenor (Martin) and bass (John) soloists from within the choir; although on a smaller scale than Haydn's famous late masses, the *St Nicholas Mass* is a delightfully charming setting, full of attractive melodies. The second major work was Ola Gjeilo's *Dreamweaver*, a thrilling new work for choir, soprano, piano and strings. The challenging and dramatic music brings this story vividly to life, and was well received by the enthusiastic audience. A selection of Christmas favourites completed the programme.

Our spring concert was a collaboration with our great friend and acclaimed violinist Steve Bingham; titled *Bach to the Future*, the programme began with a performance of Bach's extensive motet *Jesu, meine Freude*, which we interspersed with movements from his partitas and sonatas for solo violin. Eric Whitacre's *Five Hebrew Love Songs* combined the forces of choir, violin and piano in an incredibly evocative setting of these short song texts, and works by fellow twentieth century American composers Morten Lauridsen and Aaron Copland provided a further modern contrast. More futuristic still, however, were Steve's incredible performances of music for electric violin, electronics and live looping. We were grateful to Jeremy Lloyd for accompanying us in this concert at short notice.

From time to time we are fortunate to commission composers to write pieces for us, and for our summer term in Ely Cathedral's Lady Chapel we were honoured to give the world premiere of *Sing, O heav'ns*, by Ben Ponniah, who is rapidly becoming one of the most in-demand choral composers of his generation. This wonderful and uplifting new piece formed a pair with the seventeenth century Ely Cathedral organist John Amner's setting of the same words, in a concert which contrasted old and new versions of different texts. Eric Whitacre's monumental *When David heard* was a highly challenging piece which we performed magnificently, clearly moving the audience with the power of this music.

We were delighted that Anne Reece was able to return to rehearsals and accompany this concert, after a broken ankle ruled her out of playing for us during the spring term; she is a hugely valued colleague who is appreciated by all of us both for her playing at our weekly rehearsals and in concerts.

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. We were very pleased to be joined by a number of new members at the beginning of the year who have already become valued members of the choir. Thank you to everyone involved in Ely Consort for another incredibly varied and successful season!

Matthew Rudd, Musical Director

Trustees' report

Achievements and Performance

The choir has performed three highly successful concerts in the season under review:

- 7th December 2024 – Chatteris Parish Church
- 15th March 2025 – St Mary's Parish Church Ely
- 21st June 2025 – Ely Cathedral Lady Chapel (including the world premiere our newly commissioned piece *Sing, O Heavn's* by Ben Ponniah).

All the concerts were well-attended and well-received by our audiences and maintained satisfactory financial outcomes. We were supported in each concert by excellent guest soloists and efficient facilitation from the venues concerned.

Our Director of Music Matthew Rudd has developed programmes for each concert that achieve a balance of challenge and familiar work, resulting in accessible and enjoyable performances. This has been supported to a very high standard by our rehearsal pianist Anne Reece.

The choir's five Trustees and wider management team with three co-opted members have continued to meet regularly to plan all aspects of the choir's programme. An AGM was held in accordance with regulations on 23rd January at which Nick Barton and Roger Hill were re-elected as Trustees.

Our significant work in forward planning of programmes 'one year plus' ahead enabled the publication for the first time this year of an advertising flier containing details of the full season: we aim to continue this in future years. This requires continuous development in our relationships with other choirs to avoid 'clashes' and will help build audiences for future concerts.

Our recruitment drive in print and online was particularly successful leading to auditions held on 5th September 2024 and the recruitment of five new singers for the 24-25 season who quickly integrated into the choir and contributed significantly to our performance strength.

Plans for the future

Our committee will continue to keep membership under review in order to ensure, for a choir of our size, appropriate balance and adequate coverage without over-expansion in numbers. We remain open to new enquiries and suitable candidates may be admitted subject to preliminary voice tests and Matthew's approval.

Our charitable focus remains under review and open to new ideas to further our aims. We

are particularly pleased to be linking our first concert next season to the Mayor of Ely's charities – this will highlight and generate contributions to worthwhile local causes.

We have also been planning a choir tour to Prague which is set for late May 2026 and there is an exciting opportunity to collaborate with Fairhaven Singers for their landmark performance of Britten's War Requiem in Spring 2026.

Financial report

Ely Consort's 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 are Unrestricted accounts (1) the Current account and (2) the Reserve account, which are General funds, and (3) the Designated new music commission account. The Designated new music commission account contains money set aside by the Trustees for the commission of new works. The fourth account (4) 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.

For the first concert in Chatteris Church on 7th December 2024, as in previous years, we revealed full financial details of the concert to the church for the purpose of sharing any surplus made once all costs and ticket sales were considered. Ticket sales were 89 and 6 additional complimentary/reduced price/young person's tickets were issued. The concert made a small loss of £180.

The second concert was held in St. Mary's Church, Ely on 22nd March 2025. Ticket sales were 97 and 4 additional complimentary/reduced price/child tickets were issued. The choir also funded and sold interval drinks using the church's alcohol license. The concert made a surplus of £550.

The third concert was held in Ely Cathedral's Lady Chapel on 21st June 2025. For this concert we commissioned the composer Ben Ponniah to compose a new work to the words of '*Sing, O Heav'ns*' which was sung alongside a seventeenth century version by the Ely composer John Amner. The new work was very well received. The composition cost of £2,500 was funded by a £1,000 grant from the Williams Trust for Church Music and £1,500 from Ely Consort's new music commission account.

Ticket sales for the third concert were 103 and 16 additional complimentary/reduced price/child tickets were issued. At the time of closure of the reporting year we expected the concert would have made a small loss when full reconciliation of ticket sales and costs had been received in a final invoice from Ely Cathedral. Although not included in this year's accounts we can since confirm the concert lost £466.

Tickets have been offered at reduced prices for the disadvantaged for all concerts and those under aged 18 years can attend concerts free of charge. We have also provided free or reduced membership costs to meet our charitable objects and to those in full-time education.

The trustees agreed to part refund the Designated new music commission account by transfer of £1,000 from General Funds to the value of the grant received from the Williams Trust for Church Music. Ely Consort applied to HMRC for Gift Aid for the year 2024-25 and a payment of £1,150 was received in June 2025.

Ely Consort CIO made an overall loss of £515 in the 2024-25 financial year, which was expected as a result of the expenditure of £2,500 on the new work commission. The Restricted Prague tour account shows a surplus of £1,260 although some £1,180 of this comprises a cash flow loan from general funds at the time of the 1st deposit payment by members to the travel company Rayburns. This loan has since been repaid after the end of the financial year. The underlying surplus of Ely Consort CIO activities excluding the commission cost was £1,985. On August 31st 2025, the total assets of Ely Consort CIO were £9,726.

The Membership subscription of £150 of the 2024-25 season will be retained for the 2025-26 season.

HMRC requested that a Corporation Tax submission be made by Ely Consort during the tax year and this was duly submitted. HMRC later confirmed that no tax was due and that in future a tax submission should only be made when requested by HMRC.

ELY CONSORT CIO

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
AS AT 31ST AUGUST 2025

	2025			2024	
	General funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	General funds	Restricted funds
	£	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS					
Subscriptions	5,568	-	-	5,021	-
Concert Receipts	3,725	-	-	3,175	-
Sponsors - Williams Trust for Church Music	0	1,000	-	0	-
Donations/ Misc	187	-	-	341	-
Bank interest received	125	22	-	-	-
Gift Aid	1,150	-	-	1,117	-
Contributions from members for Prague Tour	-	-	25,560	0	-
	10,755	1,022	25,560	9,654	0
PAYMENTS					
New work commissioned	-	2,500	-	-	-
Music Hire/printing	810	-	-	841	-
Rehearsal Pianist	1,625	-	-	1,950	-
Soloists / Orchestra	3,150	-	-	1,825	-
Music Director	1,855	-	-	1,820	-
Venue Hire/Tuning	570	-	-	804	-
Room Hire	883	-	-	974	-
Website	19	-	-	0	-
Insurance Fees	245	-	-	259	-
Equip / Stationery	350	-	-	372	-
Misc / Reserve	365	-	-	551	-
Payments to tour company for Prague tour	-	-	25,480	-	-
	9,872	2,500	25,480	9,396	0
Excess of receipts over payments	883	-1,478	80	258	-
Balances brought forward 1 September 2024	7,751	2,500	0	9,993	-
Loan to tour account from reserve account	-1,180	0	1,180	-	-
Balances carried forward 31 August 2025	7,454	1,022	1,260	10,251	0
SURPLUS/LOSS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS					
For 2025 a loss of £515					
For 2024 a surplus of £258					

ELY CONSORT CIO					
STATEMENTS OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES					
AS AT 31ST AUGUST 2025					
	2025			2024	
	General funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	General funds	Restricted funds
	£	£	£	£	£
ASSETS					
Current Account	6	-	-	249	-
Tour account - Loan from reserve account to be paid back and balance of tour money to be refunded to members once final costs of transport are known	-	-	1,260	-	-
Commission Account	-	1,022	-	2,500	-
Reserve Account	7,448	-	-	7,502	-
Total Bank Accounts	7,454	1,022	1,260	10,251	0
TOTAL ASSETS					
For 2025 £9,736					
For 2024 £10,251					

Reserves Policy

The Accounts show unrestricted reserves of £8,476. Going forward, in accordance with our Reserves Policy, our level of reserves represents some 77% of our 2025/26 non-tour budgeted income of approximately £11,000.

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.

Risk Management

GDPR and Privacy, and Conflict of Interest policies are completed in draft and will be presented to the next meeting of Trustees.

Health and Safety, Financial Risks and Safeguarding policies are currently being developed.

We ensure that the accounts are regularly reviewed by another Trustee apart from the Treasurer in order to safeguard financial probity.

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: 27th November 2025

Independent Examiner's report

The Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees of Ely Consort CIO on the accounts from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025 as presented on pages 7 and 8 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 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: *10th November 2025*

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

Relevant professional qualification:

Fellow of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners

