# STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

England & Wales · Charity number 1195909

## Details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Status** | Registered |
| **Legal form** | CIO |
| **Registered** | 2021-09-23 |
| **Register** | View on the Charity Commission register |

## Contact

| | |
|---|---|
| **Address** | 2 The Grove<br>Sheffield<br>S174AS |
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| **Email** | enquiries@steelcitychoristers.org.uk |
| **Website** | www.steelcitychoristers.org.uk |

## Activities

**Objects:** THE OBJECTS OF THE CIO ARE:1. FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT, TO ADVANCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY THOSE LIVING IN OR EDUCATED IN SHEFFIELD AND THE SURROUNDING AREA, IN THE SUBJECT OF MUSIC AND IN PARTICULAR CHORAL MUSIC, PRIMARILY BUT NOTEXCLUSIVELY BYA) CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS TO SING ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER TO THE HIGHEST MUSICAL STANDARDS; ANDB) PROMOTING AND DELIVERING MUSICAL AND CHORAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND AND IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR PRIOR EXPERIENCE.2. TO ADVANCE PUBLIC EDUCATION IN AND APPRECIATION OF MUSIC AND IN PARTICULAR CHORAL MUSIC AND RELATED ACTIVITIES IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS PARTICULARLY IN SHEFFIELD AND THE SURROUNDING AREA, PRIMARILY BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY PRESENTING PUBLIC PERFORMANCES AND PRODUCING DIGITAL CONTENT, PARTICULARLY FOR COMMUNITIES THAT WOULD NOT OTHERWISE HAVE ACCESS TO CHORAL MUSIC.

**Activities:** Steel City Choristers is an exciting and innovative choir of children and adults that is rooted in the English choral tradition. We offer our choristers a free first-class musical education and serve a wide range of communities in and around Sheffield through a diverse programme of choral concerts, services and projects. We believe in the power of music to change lives.

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## Classification

- **How:** Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, Arts/culture/heritage/science
- **Who:** Children/young People, The General Public/mankind

## Geography

- Sheffield City

## Finances

| Period end | Income | Expenditure | Assets | Employees |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2025-08-31 | £73,046 | £75,479 | - | - |
| 2024-08-31 | £64,964 | £41,938 | - | - |
| 2023-08-31 | £57,476 | £34,266 | - | - |
| 2022-08-31 | £36,436 | £22,929 | - | - |

## Trustees

| Name | Role | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| **Katherine Caroe** | Chair | 2021-09-23 |
| Angela Holman | | 2022-04-15 |
| Chris Caroe | | 2021-09-23 |
| Gill O'Connell | | 2023-07-13 |
| Professor Jeremy Dawson | | 2021-11-23 |

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**STEEL CITY CHORISTERS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1195909

# Accounts

STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

# Annual Report

**1 September 2024**
**to**
**31 August 2025**




**Registered Charity: 1195909**

**steelcitychoristers.org.uk**

The printing of this report was kindly sponsored by **A&R Tradeprint Ltd**




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515 Abbeydale Road, Sheffield, S7 1FU

Located on the corner of Broadfield Road and Abbeydale Road

# Report of the Trustees for the Year Ending 31 August 2025

The trustees are pleased to present their annual report and independently examined accounts for our financial year 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025.

## Chair's Report

Dear Reader,

2024-25 was a huge year for Steel City Choristers! We seized as many opportunities as we could squeeze into our diary, including an Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral, a five-day residence at Winchester Cathedral and our first international tour to Germany. This was on top of continuing to serve a wide range of local churches and other communities, many of whom wouldn't otherwise have had access to cathedral-quality choral music.

Delivering our ambitious programme of activities over the last year marks a real coming of age for Steel City Choristers as a credible and capable charity. Our ability to plan, finance and deliver tours worthy of any cathedral choir successfully, on top of our busy regular schedule of activity, is a huge testament to the dedication and skill of our team of volunteers.

In particular, we owe a huge debt of thanks to Jeremy Dawson, one of our trustees, who masterminded our tours to both Winchester and Germany, as well as our day trip to sing at St Paul's. Others also worked hard to raise funds, book performances, plan meals, research social activities and more. Our team of non-singing chaperones played a vital role taking good care of our choristers, and we couldn't have made it work if our adult Clerks hadn't been willing to take time off work and give their time freely to the choir. Working together we were able to organise and deliver two fantastic tours without the services or cost of a professional tour company.

As we stretched ourselves to deliver so much over the year, we had to dig deep to draw on and strengthen the relationships that were needed to make things possible. This was true within the choir community including in relation to trustees' ability to work constructively together under pressure, the way our mixed-age group of choristers relate to each other and to adults, and the number of parents recognising and responding to the need for more chaperones and fundraising. It was also true in respect of our relationships with our hosts and partners, and we are grateful to all those with whom we collaborated.

We enjoyed making music over the year with Hallam Sinfonia, Sheffield Bach Choir and National Festival Orchestra, Sheffield Chamber Choir, Sheffield Chorale, the Sterndale Singers and the choir of St John's Church, Ranmoor. It was also a pleasure to welcome our President Hilary Davan Wetton back to Sheffield to work with us for a day.

We were also excited to develop a new partnership with Cambridge University Schola Cantorum, formed following the unexpected and controversial closure of St John's Voices. Our choirs share a significant theme in our back stories, as well as a commitment to both excellence and diversity in choral music. We had great fun hosting and singing with three members of Cambridge Schola over the course of a weekend in Sheffield this year, and look forward to the return leg when we will bring both full choirs together for a service of Compline in Cambridge in early 2026.

We were also grateful for the support of communities across Sheffield. They invited us to serve them with our music and in so doing enabled us to offer our choristers a hugely varied programme of performance opportunities. Some went further and supported us financially, making a donation to

the charity in gratitude for us singing for them and in recognition of the significant cost of training the choir. A small number partnered with us more closely to host fundraising concerts, offering us their building free of charge and helping to raise an audience. The prospect of venue costs and the challenge of selling tickets have limited our appetite for concerts to date, but this new model offers a viable way forward, enabling us to both enjoy performing more music than we would in a service, while also raising funds.

Looking back at the breadth and variety of performances we have delivered over the course of this last year in and around Sheffield and in London, Southwell, Winchester, Berlin and Leipzig, and at the rich and supportive rehearsals, training and tuition we are delivering to our diverse group of choristers, it's hard not to feel just a little proud of the depth and quality of the musical education we have given them.

Challenges do remain. It was only a small proportion of the communities that we sang for that made a financial contribution to our costs; numerous grant funders decided not to make repeat awards to us last year; and we remained heavily reliant on leadership and management provided pro bono by a small group of committed volunteers. As the choir prepares to celebrate its fifth anniversary, the trustees and I will be reviewing these and other barriers to the long term sustainability of the organisation, and acting where we can to build a firmer foundation for the future. A key priority will be to reduce our reliance on grant funding by encouraging as many people as possible to give, even a little, on a regular basis to help us grow a reliable and steady source of income. Could you help? Read more at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/donate.

Thank you again for your interest in Steel City Choristers and welcome to our annual report for 2024-25.

- The first section provides an overview of our choir and how our charity is organised
- The next two sections review our activities and finances over the last year
- The final section sets out our audited accounts for the year.

As in previous years, we have aimed to provide a full and transparent record of our activities and our finances, celebrating our achievements and giving credit where it is due. This year, we have added more photos to bring the words to life and some section indexing to help guide you through the report. I hope you are inspired by what you read, and that it prompts you to think about how you can help us on our journey ahead.



**Kate Caroe**
Chair of trustees



STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

## 2024-25 Headlines

Steel City Choristers is an independent choir in the cathedral tradition conducted by Eleanor Jarvis. Our mission is to serve communities with our music and inspire and train children to sing.

We ended the year with 33 children in the choir from 9 Sheffield postcode areas: 37% speak another language at home; 43% are non-white; 66% are female; 20% have a special need, and 94% are educated in the state sector or at home. We had 11 regular adult singers.

This year we sang 54 performances for 33 hosts (20 churches, 6 cathedrals and 7 others) - 18 of which were new hosts. This included 31 church services and 23 concerts or other events, reaching 6,400 people. By the end of the year we had sung a total of 160 performances for 69 different hosts since we were founded, including 46 churches or cathedrals.

We sang 80 different pieces of music, over 90% of which was sacred repertoire. We sang for a number of significant occasions including a centenary service for All Saints Church, Totley, a Solemn Mass celebrating a new Anglican shrine for All Saints, Arksey and at the installation of the new Lord Mayor for Sheffield City Council.

We sang two services at Southwell Minster and one at St Paul's Cathedral. We also sang Choral Evensong every weekday during a five day residency at Winchester Cathedral. On tour in Germany, we sang a service and recital in Berlin Cathedral, a recital in Bach's church in Leipzig and three other concerts.

We worked collaboratively with others, singing joint concerts with the Hallam Sinfonia orchestra and a joint Evensong with the choir of St John's, Ranmoor. We established a partnership with Cambridge University Schola Cantorum.

We received coverage from Classic FM when we sang for Dan Walker's coast-to-coast cycle ride, and our tour to Germany featured in the Sheffield Star online and in print as a centre-page spread.

Total expenditure was £75,479, just over half of which related to the cost of our exceptional trips and tours and half to our core activities in and around Sheffield. Our income was from a range of sources including donations (31%), performances (8%), grants (23%), choir members' contributions for tours (25%) and other sources (13%).

Total in-year income fell short of total expenditure, resulting in a net in-year deficit of £2,433.

Steel City Choristers remains a going concern. We ended the year with 6 months' reserves, a new Special Opportunities Fund into which we have started to save for exceptional future costs, and funds to carry forward equivalent to just under half of the costs we anticipate next year.

# 1. About Steel City Choristers

### *Our Mission*

Steel City Choristers is passionate about the power of music to change lives. Our mission is to inspire and train children to sing and serve communities with cathedral-quality choral music.

Our innovative choir of children and adults is in the cathedral tradition. This means that child choristers sing the treble line by themselves with experienced adult clerks singing the lower parts of alto, tenor and bass, and that while we are not a religious charity, most of the music we sing was written for Christian worship over the last 500 years.

We have been working hard to develop a model to help sustain and promote excellence in all-age choral music in and around Sheffield since the closure of the city's cathedral choir in 2020. Since then we have recruited a new generation of children and many new adults to sing with us and enjoyed sharing our music with a diverse range of churches and other communities across the city and beyond. We particularly enjoy singing for those who would not otherwise have access to choral music.

### *Inspiring and Training Children to Sing*

Steel City Choristers is open to boys and girls from Year 2 to Year 13, subject to an informal audition. We are passionate about making a high quality musical education through the choral tradition more accessible. We welcome children of all faiths and none, and regardless of their financial circumstances and prior musical experience.

We aim to provide the best possible musical education to our choristers, inspiring and training them to sing to cathedral standards. We offer twice-weekly term-time rehearsals, regular 1:1 singing lessons, group music theory sessions and specialist small group provision for our boys with changing voices, our senior choristers and our juniors. Singing alongside experienced adult volunteers greatly enhances our children's musical experience, stretching their aspirations and offering them a wide range of positive role models. Our all-age musical community helps young children find and develop their voice while stretching older ones to sing to adult standards, creating a supportive pathway to high quality musicianship.

We provide our choristers with an exciting, diverse range of performance opportunities, including through projects and collaborations with other choirs and musicians, as well as trips and tours away from Sheffield that stretch us musically, deepen relationships across the choir community, and lay down memories to inspire a lifelong love of singing

We take a holistic approach to supporting our choristers' development, integrating youth work into our weekly rehearsals and inviting guest speakers to help our choristers to explore and reflect on their experience singing with the choir.

As well as supporting their musical development, singing with Steel City Choristers offers children benefits for their emotional and physical well-being. They build their confidence, stamina and resilience, and develop their relationships and teamwork skills. These are all skills and attributes that will prepare them well for life.

***Serving Communities***

We serve a wide range of communities in and around Sheffield with our music, working collaboratively with our hosts to understand their needs and co-create what and how we will sing for them. We want more people to benefit from the beauty and joy of high quality choral music. So we aim to make it more relevant and accessible, particularly to communities with less cultural and social capital, including through our innovative projects *Lament* and *Reasons to Sing!*

Our choristers' dedication means that we perform around 40 to 50 times a year, and have, to date, sung a total of 160 times for 69 different hosts since we were founded. We span the sacred and secular divide by singing for any community that appreciates the artistic and spiritual value of our music.

In line with our roots in the English sacred choral tradition, the majority of our engagements are leading worship in churches. We know that many people find music to be a powerful vehicle for worship, creating a space for personal contemplation and helping them celebrate life and be present in the moment. Our aim is therefore to:

- **enable** choral worship for churches that are unable to sustain a choir of their own
- **enhance** the choral worship of churches whose choirs value our support to sing more ambitious repertoire
- **engage** churches from other musical traditions to experience the joys of choral worship.

We have sung for a diverse range of churches from many different traditions and denominations, singing services of Mattins, Eucharist and Evensong as well as Songs of Praise style services to celebrate music as a form of worship.

The joys and benefits of choral music are also appreciated by many people in non-religious settings too. So we enjoy singing for a variety of non-church events, including to help raise funds for other local charities.

**Our CARE Values**

**Community**
We value, trust and empower our people

**Ambition**
We work at the cutting edge, continually innovating in our pursuit of excellence

**Resilience**
We work hard to perform well as a team under pressure

**Enjoyment**
We have fun, enjoying and sharing the joys of choral music!

### *Constitution*

Steel City Choristers is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Foundation). It was registered as charity number 1195909 by the Charity Commission for England and Wales in September 2021. Our registered address is 2 The Grove, Sheffield, S17 4AS.

### *Trustees*

The charity is governed by a board of trustees. There are no external persons or bodies entitled to appoint trustees to the board and there are no corporate trustees. All appointments to the board are made by the trustees on the basis of people's relevant skills and experience.

There were five trustees governing the charity in 2024-25.

- **Kate Caroe** (Chair) – Home educator and founding director of OutoftheBox Training & Consultancy, a not-for-profit organisation supporting personal and community wellbeing through the power of story and play. Kate is paid to teach our Juniors. She sings alto in the choir and is a choir parent.
- **Jeremy Dawson** (Treasurer) – Professor of Health Management at the University of Sheffield, Chair of the local Hallam Sinfonia orchestra, and former Lay Clerk at Sheffield Cathedral. Jeremy leads our work with boys with changing voices on a voluntary basis and sings tenor in the choir.
- **Chris Caroe** (Secretary) – Civil servant in the cross-government Policy Profession Unit. Chris leads fundraising on a voluntary basis, sings tenor in the choir and is a choir parent.
- **Angela Holman** (Designated Safeguarding Lead) – Primary school supply teacher and former deputy headteacher. Angela is a choir parent.
- **Gill O'Connell** – Secondary school teacher and choir parent.

### *President and Patrons*

Conductor and organist, **Hilary Davan Wetton**, serves as honorary president of the charity. In addition, we have four patrons:

- **Hugh Facey** – founder and chairman of Gripple Ltd and Loadhog Ltd
- **Lindsay Gray** – conductor and former Director of The Royal School of Church Music
- **Joshua Stephens** – Sub-Organist at Winchester Cathedral
- **Elizabeth Watts** – soprano and Fellow of the Royal College of Music.

### *Advisors*

The trustees, and in particular the Chair, are supported by a group of advisors who offer their experience, advice and encouragement on a pro bono basis to help the charity meet its objectives.

- **Stewart Campbell** – lecturer in Music Management, University of York
- **Ian Naylor** – Head of Music Education for Sheffield
- **Esmé Page** – co-founder of Sing2G7 and founder of Cornwall Hugs Grenfell

- **Neil Taylor** – conductor and organist, former Director of Music at Sheffield Cathedral
- **Nick Waterfield** – Chair of Parson Cross Initiative and Pioneer Methodist Minister.

### *Leadership*

The charity does not employ any staff. It currently relies on the good will of volunteers to provide pro bono most of the day to day leadership and management of the choir. The board of trustees delegates leadership on specific strategic priorities in three key areas:

1. **Operations** – led by Jeremy Dawson
    - **To Sing:** Provide a high quality musical education to our choristers
    - **To Recruit**: Attract new children and adults to grow and diversify our membership
    - **To Safeguard**: Ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved in the charity.
2. **Partnerships, Projects and Communications** – led by Kate Caroe
    - **To Reach Out:** Establish and maintain relationships with partners and hosts to plan our performance schedule and diversify those hearing and appreciating our singing
    - **To Innovate:** Design and deliver creative ways to engage new audiences in choral music, particularly those who wouldn't otherwise have access to it
    - **To Promote**: Raise public awareness and interest in Steel City Choristers.
3. **Finance and Governance** – led by Chris Caroe
    - **To Thrive:** Ensure the sustainability and financial viability of the organisation
    - **To Comply:** Ensure the propriety and efficiency of our governance and reporting.

### *Musical Direction*

The freelance musicians engaged to direct and train the choir are:

- **Eleanor Jarvis** - Director of Music
- **Timothy Peters** - Assistant Director of Music
- **Vivien Pike** - Singing teacher
- **Kate Caroe** - Juniors
- **Jeremy Dawson** - Changing voices (pro bono).

***Risks***

The principal risks facing the charity and how these are mitigated are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Volunteer risk**<br>That we do not continue to benefit from the very high level of pro bono support we rely on to plan, deliver and administer the choir's activity. | **Mitigation**: We try to put relationships first and make efforts to protect the wellbeing of all those who contribute their time and skills voluntarily to enable the successful operation of the choir. We continue to look for opportunities to share tasks more widely to reduce our heavy reliance on a few individuals, and also to weigh up the feasibility of incorporating additional activities within our budget to be undertaken on a paid basis. |
| **Recruitment risk**<br>That we are unable to sustain the number of children and adults singers that we need to operate a viable choir. | **Mitigation**: We recruit children to sing in the choir without prejudice to their background or prior experience, and we do not charge fees so that money is never a barrier to singing with us. We maximise word of mouth and social media opportunities to encourage children to audition to join us, especially at the beginning of the school year. We hold *Come and Sing Evensong* and a *Be a Chorister at Christmas* events each year as well as a 'bring a friend' open rehearsal to create opportunities for children to experience singing with us. Our focus on building relationships through our youth work and choir socials supports retention of existing choristers. We encourage boys whose voices change to continue singing with us, including through specialist music training during rehearsal time. We recruit experienced adult singers for the lower parts mainly via word of mouth. |
| **Funding risk**<br>That we are unable to secure the funding we need to sustain our work. | **Mitigation**: We aim to fund our activities drawing on a diverse range of sources of income. Our priority is to grow the amount of reliable regular income we receive from committed donors. This will enable us to reduce our dependence on grant funding which we know we cannot take for granted. We set an annual budget at the start of the year having regard to funds currently available and likely future income. Financial controls ensure all expenditure remains within budget. We maintain a financial reserve equivalent to approximately six months' core operating costs in line with our Reserves Policy published on the Policies page of our website. This creates resilience should we need to continue core operations while addressing a significant shortfall in funding. |
| **Safeguarding risk**<br>That a safeguarding incident occurs despite the policies and procedures in place to keep everyone safe. | **Mitigation**: We have appropriate checks and training in place for all adults who are involved with working with children in the choir. Members of our trained team of chaperones are present at every rehearsal and event involving our children. Our robust safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed at least annually in line with Charity Commission guidance. |
| **Retention risk**<br>That our Director of Music leaves unexpectedly. | **Mitigation**: The trustees have developed a positive and collaborative relationship with our Director of Music and are confident that she shares our strong sense of ownership and pride in relation to the operation and future plans for the choir. We have agreed with her that she will provide three months' notice of any intention to step down from her role. |

# 2. Review of Activities in 2024-25

***Overview***

In 2024-25, Steel City Choristers maintained its intense schedule of activity serving communities in and around Sheffield, while also planning and delivering two week-long residential tours to Winchester and to Germany.

***Chorister Recruitment***

Over the year, we recruited 7 new children to the choir - three as choristers and four as juniors. Four of our juniors progressed this year to become probationers in the main choir and went on during the year to be given their surplices and welcomed as full choristers. At the end of the year we had 33 children in the choir: 27 choristers, 4 juniors, and 2 boys with changing voices:

- 37% speak a language other than English at home
- 43% are an ethnicity other than white
- 66% are female
- 20% identify as having a special need (learning, medical or physical)
- 94% are educated in the state sector or at home
- they live in 9 postcode areas of Sheffield.





*In the choir stalls at Winchester Cathedral*




*At the Lyceum Theatre stage door*

We held our *Be a Chorister at Christmas* event as part of an Advent carol service to create an open opportunity for any child to experience performing with the choir. However, the majority of our new recruits were introduced to the choir by word of mouth.

We were delighted for two of the choristers who left us this year. One who left mid-year was accepted to become one of the first ever girl choristers at St Paul's Cathedral, and the other, one of our sixth-form boys, left at the end of the year to take up a gap-year bass choral scholarship at Hereford Cathedral.

***Music Education***

Eleanor Jarvis continued as our Director of Music this year, bringing her tenure with us to three years. We were pleased to welcome Timothy Peters back to Sheffield, engaging him as our Assistant Director of Music with a focus on singing tuition to our younger choristers.

We offered our choristers a rich, varied and fun musical education through the choral tradition that included regular rehearsals, small group tuition, singing lessons, and music theory lessons as well as a wide range of performances, musical workshops, and exciting opportunities to tour in this country and abroad.

- **Rehearsals**: we continued to rehearse on Mondays and Fridays for a total of four hours a week, twelve weeks each term. Adult Clerks joined the choristers for the final 30 minutes of their Friday rehearsal before having an hour's rehearsal of their own.

- **Small group work**: We provided small group tuition in parallel to main choir rehearsals to a range of groups within the choir. This included dedicated time and support for our senior choristers, our boys with changing voices and our junior choristers (who rehearse separately to build a strong musical foundation before progressing into the main choir).

- **Singing lessons:** We continue to offer our older choristers a free 20 minute singing lesson with Vivien Pike every fortnight in term time, which some choose to extend to 30 or 40 minutes at their own expense. Timothy Peters provided singing tuition to our younger choristers during rehearsal time, initially in small groups and then increasingly 1:1 as he increased his hours mid-year to work during both rehearsals each week.

- **Music theory sessions:** We ran four blocks of four theory sessions in each of the autumn and spring half terms for all of our choristers. We settled into ability groups, each led by an adult from the choir community, with worksheets developed by our Director of Music to draw out key teaching points based on current repertoire. The children were eager to learn and progressed through the material quickly, prompting us to consider how in the year ahead we will provide them with even more material to stretch their understanding of music theory.

- **Performances:** Specific highlights of our performance schedule in and around Sheffield this year included the opportunity for our choristers to perform:
    - Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, together with the Sheffield Bach Choir and the National Festival Orchestra
    - as part of Roundabout's *Night at the Musicals* fundraising evening to an audience of over 1,000 at the Lyceum Theatre
    - a Christmas concert with the Hallam Sinfonia orchestra to two separate audiences at Sheffield Town Hall.

- **Music workshops:** We were pleased to be able to arrange two special opportunities to enrich our choristers' musical education this year:
    - a morning workshop working with and learning from Hilary Davan Wetton, followed by an informal concert for parents
    - a master-class style workshop to have a go at conducting a quartet including members of Cambridge University Schola Cantorum.

- **Trips and Tours:** We were delighted to have the opportunity to take the choir on a number of trips and tours away from Sheffield to enjoy and stretch ourselves musically, and as part of our intentional approach to inspiring our choristers to a life-long love of singing:
    - A day trip to sing the morning Eucharist and Choral Evensong at Southwell Minster
    - A day trip to sing Choral Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral
    - Five days in residence at Winchester Cathedral
    - A week in Germany singing in Berlin and Leipzig.

On the whole, choristers' attendance rates were high despite their intense schedule of rehearsals and performances. We recognise the dedication and commitment this reflects from their parents as much as from the children themselves. We are grateful for all the efforts parents make to accommodate our varied programme in their family's schedule and to transport their children to our ever changing set of venues across the city and beyond.

**2024-25 Feedback from Supporters and Congregation / Audience Members**

*"Steel City Choristers provides excellent musical and social development for children & young people. A great community!"*

*"Those very young choristers - singing that kind of church music - are wonderfully impressive."*

*"Very pleased to see so many young people singing in the choir at a time when so many choirs across the country are struggling to recruit new members."*

*"Beautiful singing, how wonderful to see young people involved."*

*"Steel City Choristers is doing a wonderful job introducing children and young people to the joys of choral singing, being part of something bigger than themselves, making new friends, having fun and sharing unique experiences and places together."*



***Holistic Development***

As part of our holistic approach to supporting our choristers' development, we continued to build in time for youth work during our Monday rehearsals each week. We organised and led our own youth work sessions drawing on input from members of the choir community and outside guest speakers. Over the year, the choristers enjoyed a wide range of youth work activities, including:

- a visit from Bishop Pete to hear about the role that music plays in his spiritual life
- discussions prompted by the themes of our *Reasons to Sing!* songs and to meet the Metal Methodists with whom we hope to repeat the project in future
- sessions to 'Meet a Clerk' and hear about their musical journey
- a session with the charity Support Dogs to learn about their work ahead of a concert we were singing to raise funds for them
- a guest speaker from Sheffield Music Hub talking about vocal health, and another session hearing about the Harmony Works project to build a new centre for youth music in Sheffield
- reflecting on and preparing for our trips to Winchester and Berlin
- using OutoftheBox to explore the Advent story and care for the environment

- playing musical statues to learn how to stand still at the end of a piece until the conductor relaxes, working with a dance teacher to learn about posture, and a discussion about how to behave for and relate to a concert audience.

We also invested in events that helped to build relationships between the children and between them and adults across the choir community. We enjoyed each other's company at our annual Chorister Concert and Quiz and Chips evening, as well as on our termly choir socials which included bowling, roller skating and going out for an all you can eat breakfast! This year we also introduced socials for the adult clerks, taking them out for a meal at Christmas and at one other point in the year.



*An OutoftheBox story at Southwell Minster*



*Youth work discussion with Bishop Pete*



## 2024-25 Feedback from Choristers

We asked our choristers in a youth work session to make a picture using OutoftheBox materials to reflect what they value about choir and what Steel City Choristers means to them. This is some of what they said:

*"Choir is a good place to belong because it helps you make friends and express your feelings, and if you're not feeling well they can help you."*

*"It's good at choir cuz you get to learn how to sing. I could sing a bit but now I can sing much better and that can serve me for my life."*

*"The people say kind things to other people in choir."*

*"Different people talk together and everyone has different personalities."*

*"Everyone is from lots of different backgrounds and we sing for lots of different people."*

*"I haven't been here very long but everyone is very nice and I feel welcome."*

*"Singing but at the same time worshipping. I enjoy myself."*

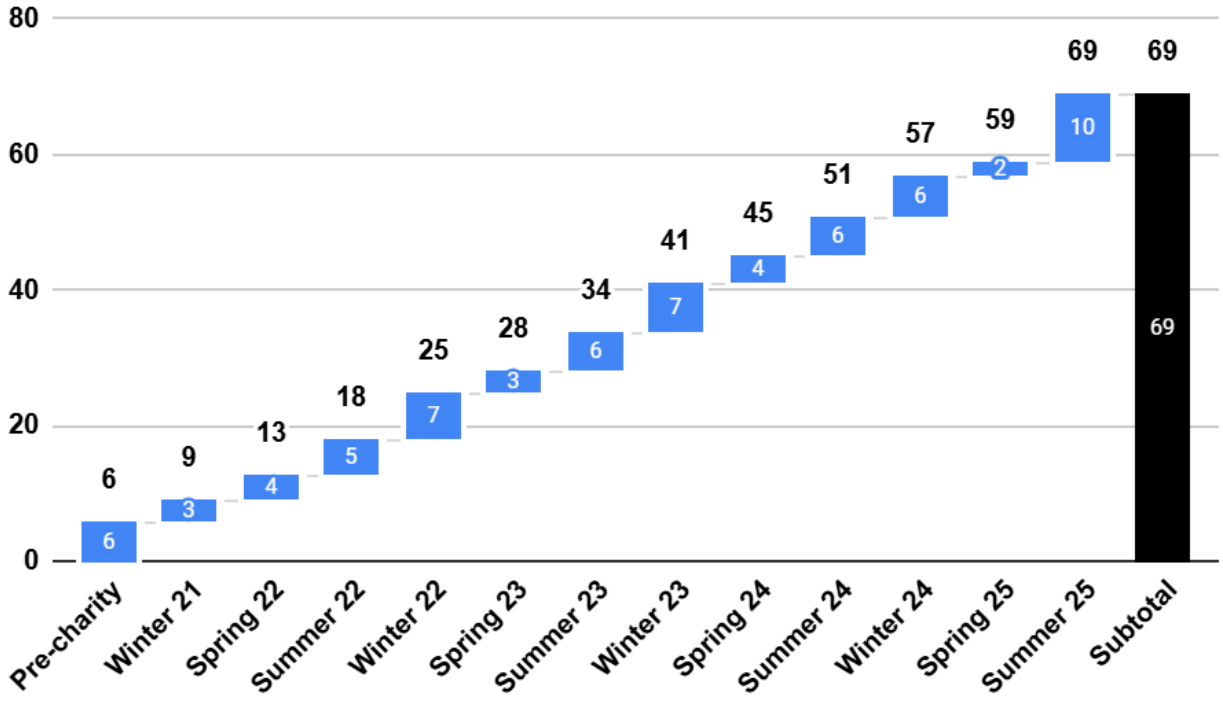
*"There's lots of different people in choir - lots of different backgrounds and cultures and differently-abled people. It makes you feel welcome and feel like you fit in. People all go to different schools and it feels like a family."*

*"We enjoy ourselves through singing and make friends."*

***Hosts***

We sang for a total of 33 different host communities in 2024-25, including 20 different churches and 6 cathedrals. 18 of these were hosts for whom we sang for the first time, bringing the total number of hosts that we have sung for to date to 69, including 46 different churches or cathedrals.

*New host communities, by term*




The diversity of the communities we sang for reflects our commitment to sharing choral music as widely as possible. We sang services for both Catholic and Anglican cathedrals, and in churches from a wide range of traditions and denominations including: Anglo-Catholic, Liberal Anglican, Conservative Evangelical Anglican, Charismatic Anglican, URC and Methodist. We sang for churches in a variety of settings ranging from the rural Hope Valley, to the Sheffield suburbs and inner-city Sheffield estates.

We continued to look for opportunities to share our singing with those who would not otherwise have access to choral music. This included singing for:

- **St Swithun's Church, Sheffield Manor Parish** - their first ever choral service
- **Mount Tabor Methodist Church, Parson Cross** - a traditional Advent Carol Service of nine lessons and carols.

Our hosts often invited us to sing to help celebrate significant moments in the life of their community, including:

- **All Saints Church, Totley** - a Centenary service with Bishop Pete
- **Support Dogs** - a Christmas concert with the Rock Choir to raise funds for the charity
- **Sheffield City Council** - the installation of the new Lord Mayor
- **Diocesan Youth Network** - the annual Breathe Deep youth event

- **All Saints, Arksey** - a Solemn Mass to celebrate the installation of a new Anglican icon
- **St Peter's, Horbury** - an Evensong to conclude the Horbury Music Conference.



*The installation of the new Lord Mayor*



*Support Dogs Christmas concert*



| 2024-25 Feedback from Hosts |
|---|
| **Father Blair Radford, St Peter & St John, Barnsley**<br>*"The Steel City Choristers bring a musical delight to our worship. In a world so devoid of joy they bring a ray of light and joy to our services."*<br><br>**Sue Williams, Church Warden, St Swithun's Church, Manor**<br>*"I love every performance and applaud the way you care for the choristers, ensuring they learn, enjoy the music and have fun!"*<br><br>**Revd Canon Dr Catherine Okoronkwo, Residentiary Canon and Steward, St Paul's**<br>*"It was such a treat and blessing to hear Steel City Choristers sing Evensong here at St Paul's Cathedral. What a wonderful ministry."* |

***Our Schedule***

We sang 54 performances in 2024-25, including 31 church services and 23 concerts or other events. We had many more invitations to sing but didn't have the capacity to accept them all. The intensity of our schedule increased from 42 performances in the previous year mainly due to our 11 tour performances: five services of Evensong at Winchester Cathedral, and one service and five other performances in Germany.

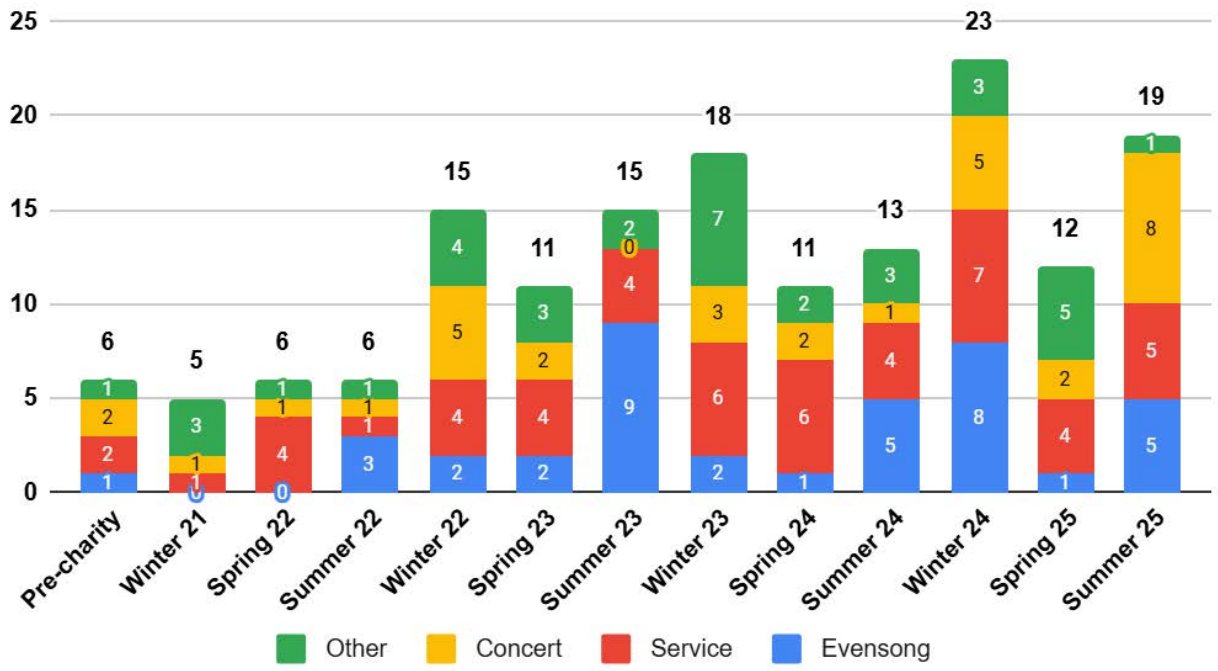
*Total singing engagements - 3 year trend*

| Performances | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Church Services | 25 | 24 | 31 |
| Concerts and other events | 16 | 18 | 23 |
| **Total** | **41** | **42** | **54** |

We estimate that we reached around 6,400 people through our performances in 2024-25, a significant increase on the 4,300 we reached in the previous year. Given our ambition to introduce more people to the English choral tradition, we were pleased that the number of people attending our choral services totalled approximately 3,370, up from 2,160 last year. Average attendance at our 14 services of Choral Evensong was 44.

We sang our 150th performance for Roundabout's *Night at the Musicals* at the Lyceum Theatre in Sheffield in June 2024. By the end of the year, we had sung a total of 160 performances since we were founded.

*Singing Engagements to date, by term and type*




*All Singing Engagements in 2024-25*

| # | Date | Host | | Event | Reach |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 29-Sep-24 | St Mary's Church, Ecclesfield | | Evensong | 55 |
| 2 | 03-Oct-24 | Sheffield City Centre | | Singing for Dan Walker, Classic FM | 30 |
| 3 | 13-Oct-24 | St Peter & St John, Barnsley | New | Eucharist | 31 |
| 4 | 13-Oct-24 | St Peter & St John, Barnsley | | Evensong | 16 |
| 5 | 20-Oct-24 | St Andrew's URC | | Morning service | 42 |
| 6 | 28-Oct-24 | Winchester Cathedral | New | Evensong | 25 |
| 7 | 29-Oct-24 | Winchester Cathedral | | Evensong | 43 |
| 8 | 30-Oct-24 | Winchester Cathedral | | Evensong | 78 |
| 9 | 31-Oct-24 | Winchester Cathedral | | Evensong | 47 |
| 10 | 01-Nov-24 | Winchester Cathedral | | Evensong | 41 |
| 11 | 17-Nov-24 | All Saints Church, Totley | New | Centenary Service | 250 |
| 12 | 21-Nov-24 | Samuel Worth Chapel | New | Fundraising Concert | 26 |
| 13 | 24-Nov-24 | St Mark's Church, Broomhill | | Come and Sing Evensong | 28 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | 01-Dec-24 | Mount Tabor, Parson Cross | | Advent Carol Service | 47 |
| 15 | 05-Dec-24 | Sheffield Cathedral | | Carols on the Forecourt | 100 |
| 16 | 07-Dec-24 | St Matthew's, Carver Street | | Recital with Hilary Davan Wetton | 45 |
| 17 | 12-Dec-24 | All Saints Church, Ecclesall | | Charity Concert for Support Dogs | 100 |
| 18 | 14-Dec-24 | Sheffield Town Hall | New | Concert with Hallam Sinfonia - 2pm | 150 |
| 19 | 14-Dec-24 | Sheffield Town Hall | | Concert with Hallam Sinfonia - 5pm | 100 |
| 20 | 15-Dec-24 | Cambridge Street Collective | New | Carol Singing | 70 |
| 21 | 22-Dec-24 | St John's Church, Owlerton | | Carol Service | 210 |
| 22 | 24-Dec-24 | St Mary's Church, Ecclesfield | | Christmas Eve Carol Service | 300 |
| 23 | 24-Dec-24 | St Mark's Church, Broomhill | | Midnight Mass | 80 |
| 24 | 10-Jan-25 | St John's Church, Owlerton | | New Year Celebration | 60 |
| 25 | 25-Jan-25 | Sheffield Cathedral | | Breathe Deep Youth Event | 261 |
| 26 | 09-Feb-25 | St Swithun's Church, Manor | New | Service with Schola Cantorum members | 38 |
| 27 | 15-Feb-25 | St Matthew's, Carver Street | | Wedding | 80 |
| 28 | 01-Mar-25 | St Mary's Church, Ecclesfield | | Wedding | 80 |
| 29 | 09-Mar-25 | St Andrew's Church, Psalter Lane | | Morning Service | 78 |
| 30 | 15-Mar-25 | Sheffield Cathedral | | St Matthew's Passion with Bach choir | 200 |
| 31 | 23-Mar-25 | St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield | | Joint Classical Sheffield Concert | 200 |
| 32 | 29-Mar-25 | Whirlow Spirituality Centre | | Devotional Performance | 36 |
| 33 | 05-Apr-25 | St Paul's Cathedral, London | New | Evensong | 500 |
| 34 | 18-Apr-25 | St Mark's Church, Broomhill | | Good Friday Service | 311 |
| 35 | 18-Apr-25 | St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield | | Good Friday Service | 300 |
| 36 | 26-Apr-25 | Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses | | Fundraising Concert | 50 |
| 37 | 11-May-25 | St Mary's Church, Ecclesfield | | Evensong | 39 |
| 38 | 18-May-25 | Beauchief Abbey | | Evensong | 36 |
| 39 | 18-May-25 | Sheffield Town Hall | | Lord Mayor’s Installation | 120 |
| 40 | 01-Jun-25 | Southwell Minster | New | Eucharist | 80 |
| 41 | 01-Jun-25 | Southwell Minster | | Choral Evensong | 41 |
| 42 | 04-Jun-25 | All Saints, Arksey | New | Solemn Mass | 40 |
| 43 | 15-Jun-25 | St John's Church, Ranmoor | | Children's Come & Sing Evensong | 36 |
| 44 | 18-Jun-25 | Lyceum Theatre | New | Roundabout’s A Night at the Musicals | 1,000 |
| 45 | 22-Jun-25 | St Matthew's, Carver Street | | Corpus Christi Service | 89 |
| 46 | 27-Jun-25 | St Peter's Church, Hope | New | Fundraising Concert | 56 |
| 47 | 28-Jun-25 | St Peter's, Horbury | New | Horbury Music Conference Evensong | 30 |
| 48 | 06-Jul-25 | Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses | | End of term Evensong | 38 |
| 49 | 05-Aug-25 | Alte Lankwitz community centre | New | Community Concert | 45 |
| 50 | 06-Aug-25 | Berlin Cathedral | New | Recital before Midday prayers | 150 |
| 51 | 07-Aug-25 | Lankwitz Church | New | Concert | 65 |
| 52 | 08-Aug-25 | St Thomas Kirche, Leipzig | New | Recital | 52 |
| 53 | 09-Aug-25 | Zum Guten Hirten, Friedenau | New | Concert | 104 |
| 54 | 10-Aug-25 | Berlin Cathedral | | Morning Eucharist Service | 320 |
| | | **Number of New Hosts** | **18** | **Total Reach** | **6,449** |

***Repertoire***

We selected our repertoire to meet the needs of our hosts and the nature of the services or events they invited us to sing for. We also took into account how much new music we could learn in the available rehearsal time. Our twice-weekly rehearsal schedule meant that, over the course of the year, we could learn and perform a wide repertoire of 80 different pieces of music.

Over 90% of the music we sang (74 pieces) was sacred repertoire typical of a cathedral choir or active parish church choir. We sang several settings of liturgical office texts including settings of the Eucharist, canticles and responses for Evensong, as well as psalms and a wide variety of anthems. We also sang larger and more challenging works including the Bach *St Matthew Passion*. We actively chose pieces by contemporary composers, as well as several female composers including Joanna Forbes-L'Estrange, Sally Beamish, Eleanor Daley, Imogen Holst, Sasha Johnson Manning and Kathryn Rose.
Our full sacred repertoire list (other than psalms and hymns) was:

**2024-25 Sacred Music Repertoire**

**Anthems**

- Bairstow - *Blessed City, Heavenly Salem*
- Bairstow - *I Sat Down Under his Shadow*
- Briggs - *Media Vita*
- Bruckner - *Christus Factus Est*
- Bruckner - *Locus Iste*
- Bruckner - *Os Justi Meditabitur*
- Burton - *Rest*
- Byrd - *Ave Verum Corpus*
- Byrd - *Ne Irascaris Domine*
- Daley - *Upon your Heart*
- De Severac - *Tantum Ergo*
- Gardiner - *Evening Hymn*
- Gibbons - *Almighty and Everlasting God*
- Gibbons - *Drop, Drop Slow Tears*
- Gjeillo - *Ubi Caritas*
- Handl - *De coelo veniet*
- Haydn - *The Heavens are Telling*
- Holst - *A Hymne to Christ*
- John IV of Portugal - *Crux Fidelis*
- Jones - *Bring us O Lord God*
- Leighton - *Solus ad Victimam*
- MacDonald - *Crux Fidelis*
- Nardone - *I Give you a New Commandment*
- Palestrina - *Sicut Cervus*
- Parry - *My Soul, There is a Country*
- Parry - *There is an Old Belief*
- Paulus - *The Road Home*
- Purcell - *Thou knowest, Lord*

**Mass settings**

- Stanford in C and F
- Darke in F
- Byrd - *Mass for Three Voices*
- Byrd - *Mass for Five Voices*

**Canticles**

- Brewer *in D*
- Byrd - *Second Service*
- Dyson *in D*
- Forbes-L'Estrange - *Kings College Service*
- Gibbons - *Short Service*
- Howells - *St Paul's Service*
- Rose *Canticles*
- Wood *in D*
- Wood *in E flat no. 2*
- Stanford in C
- Victoria - *Magnificat Sexti Toni*

**Responses**

- Ayleward
- Clucas
- Johnson Manning
- Rose
- Tomkins

**Advent and Christmas**

- Adam - *O Holy Night*
- Beamish - *In the Stillness*
- Britten - *This Little Babe*
- Britten - *A New Year Carol*
- Gardner - *Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing day*

STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

**We sang 31 services and 23 other performances…**





**for 26 churches and 7 other hosts…**



# 2024-25



reaching
6,400 people…





including tours to Winchester and Germany.

**Charity Number: 1195909**

| | |
|---|---|
| • Reger - *Nachtied*<br>• Rutter - *A Gaelic Blessing*<br>• Sanders - *The Reproaches*<br>• Schumann - *Abendfeier in Venedig*<br>• Smith-Moore - *We Shall Walk*<br>• Stainer - *I saw the Lord*<br>• Stopford - *In my Father's House*<br>• Victoria - *O Quam Gloriosum*<br>• Wesley - *Blessed be the God & Father*<br>• Wood - *O Thou the Central Orb*<br>**Other**<br>• Bach - St Matthew Passion | • Head - *The Little Road to Bethlehem*<br>• Howells - *A Spotless Rose*<br>• arr. Humphris - *The 12 Days of Christmas*<br>• Mathias - *A Babe is Born*<br>• Ord - *Adam Lay Ybounden*<br>• Perinpanayagam - *In Bethlehem Above*<br>• Sweelinck - *Hodie Christus Natus Est*<br>• Tchaikovsky - *The Crown of Roses*<br>• Warlock - *Bethlehem Down*<br>• Warlock - *Balulalow*<br>• Weir - *Drop down ye heavens*<br>• Wilberg - *Ding dong! Merrily on high* |

We also sang our own arrangements of a number of popular songs to help make choral singing more accessible to a wider audience.



| 2024-25 Popular Music Repertoire | |
|---|---|
| **Arranged by Jeremy Dawson:**<br>• *Bare Necessities* - Terry Gilkyson<br>• *Fly me to the Moon* - Bart Howard<br>• *You've got a Friend* - Carole King | **Arranged by Timothy Peters:**<br>• *Hi Ho Silver Lining* - English & Weiss<br>• *This is me* - Paul & Pasek<br>• *Wonderful World* - Thiele & Weiss |

***Musical Collaborations***

We developed and/or maintained musical collaborations and partnerships with a number of organisations over the course of the year.

- **Cambridge University Schola Cantorum** (formerly St John's Voices) - We established a partnership, building on the commonalities in our backstories, to provide positive role models to our choristers and create opportunities to stretch and inspire them musically, and to give Schola Cantorum reach beyond Cambridge to support and experience grass-roots community-based choral music. We launched the partnership by hosting three members of Schola Cantorum for a weekend, involving a conducting workshop and the first ever choral service at St Swithin's Church in the Sheffield Manor Parish.
- **Hallam Sinfonia** - We joined up to deliver a Christmas concert twice to audiences at Sheffield Town Hall.
- **Sheffield Bach Choir** and **National Festival Orchestra** - Having learned and performed Bach's St Matthew's Passion last year, we were pleased to have the opportunity to perform it again with new partners at Sheffield Cathedral.
- **Sheffield Chamber Choir, Sheffield Chorale and the Sterndale Singers** - We partnered with three other Sheffield Choirs to perform a joint concert at St Marie's Catholic Cathedral as the conclusion of the Classical Sheffield Weekend, including a performance by all four choirs of John Tavener's *God is With Us*.
- **St John's Church, Ranmoor** - We teamed up to sing a joint service of Choral Evensong.

We were also pleased to connect with the Metal Methodist community and begin to explore the possibility of a partnership through which to explore the common *Reasons to Sing!* that sit behind our highly contrasting musical traditions.



*With members of Schola Cantorum on the Manor*



*With the choir of St John's Ranmoor*



***Residence at Winchester Cathedral - October 2024***

On our first ever week-long residential tour we sang Choral Evensong at Winchester Cathedral every weekday during October half term 2024. We were accompanied on the organ by our former Director of Music and current Sub-Organist at Winchester, Joshua Stephens.

Singing each day in the beautiful setting of the country's longest cathedral was a memorable and inspiring experience. Going away together helped develop relationships across the choir. Our choristers developed their stamina and resilience as they were stretched to sing to the best of their ability for five days in a row, working hard physically and concentrating mentally to perform five choral services to the high standard that Winchester expected. Overall, it was not only great fun, but excellent training in how to work in a professional way as part of a team.

We stayed at Lyons Copse Scout Centre and each day, before rehearsing for Evensong, we enjoyed an outing. We explored Winchester and visited the Winchester Science Centre and the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth. On our last evening we had a campfire in the woods.

We are grateful to the Hollowford Trust and Worrall Male Voice Choir Musical Grants Foundation for their specific financial support that helped make our tour to Winchester possible.



*In the Winchester Cathedral song school*



*In the quire at Winchester Cathedral*

***Trips to St Paul's Cathedral and Southwell Minster - April and June 2025***

In April 2025, we hired a coach for a day trip to London to sing Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral. We rehearsed first in the song school in the Crypt before being joined on the organ by our former Director of Music Joshua Stephens, to rehearse in the stalls. Before Evensong, those with a head for heights climbed the steps to the Whispering Gallery and onwards up to the top of the dome, enjoying wonderful views across London on a beautiful clear spring day. Evensong itself was attended by a huge congregation which made singing into the cathedral's enormous acoustic all the more exciting!

In June 2025, we sang both Sunday services at Southwell Minister. We received a very warm welcome and talked with a number of people who had followed our story and were keen to know more about our pioneering work. Between the two services, the choristers either played in the gardens or joined an outdoor OutoftheBox story session with members of the congregation.



*At St Paul's Cathedral*



*At Southwell Minster*

***Tour to Berlin & Leipzig - August 2025***

We had a wonderful week in Germany in August 2025. We were based in Berlin, staying in a youth hostel in a south eastern suburb of the city. We travelled by public transport each day to our venues and other activities, other than for on one day when we took a day trip by coach to Leipzig. In total, there were 45 of us on tour, including a team of six non-singing chaperones who helped to look after the children as we travelled and prepared for our performances.

Our schedule of over the week was:

- Monday - travel to Germany
- Tuesday - informal cabaret evening with a local church congregation
- Wednesday - recital at Berlin Cathedral
- Thursday - concert at Lankwitz church
- Friday - recital at St Thomas church, Leipzig
- Saturday - concert at Friedenau church
- Sunday - Eucharist at Berlin Cathedral
- Monday - no performances other than singing on the plane home!

Although we were performing every day, we made sure there was time to have fun together exploring Berlin. Over the course of the week we climbed the Berlin Cathedral dome for views across the city and walked to see Check Point Charlie, the Brandenburg Gate and the Holocaust Memorial. We also visited the Berlin Spy Museum, Berlin Zoo and the Berlin Musical Instrument Museum. On our day trip to Leipzig we enjoyed a visit to the Bach Museum.

We were kindly hosted throughout the week by Martin Haesner, the Director of the Lankwitz Trombone Choir, known to members of the choir through previous language exchanges to Berlin. We are indebted to him for his help organising many aspects of the tour, particularly for the warm welcome he orchestrated from his parish congregation and which he himself offered by hosting the whole choir at his house for a barbeque and by welcoming the choristers to meet and feed his small flock of sheep!



*At the Brandenburg Gate*



*Our recital at Berlin Cathedral*



We are grateful to the Ecclesfield Welfare and Educational Charities, Hollowford Trust and Sheffield Church Burgesses Education Foundation for their specific financial support that helped make our tour to Germany possible.

We are also grateful to all those who supported our fundraising efforts and to our non-singing chaperones who helped make the tour possible. The whole tour was an incredible amount of work and a huge responsibility for us as a team of volunteers, but we had a wonderful week and really enjoyed getting to know each other and the children better. Our Clerks joined in enthusiastically with the spirit of the tour, establishing men's and women's close harmony groups, and giving the children warm encouragement while also enjoying themselves too - especially after dark!

### *Singing Workshops*

While the workshops we have delivered in schools in the past have been well received, there has turned out to be little correlation between this and recruitment into the choir. In light of Sheffield Cathedral's expanding Schools Singing Programme and the Sheffield Music Hub's ongoing schools work, trustees decided that workshops in schools would not be a core priority for 2024-25 . We remain keen to develop more in-depth partnership with one or more schools through which we might have more long term impact on the musical development of their pupils and create a more supported pathway to pupils considering joining our choir.

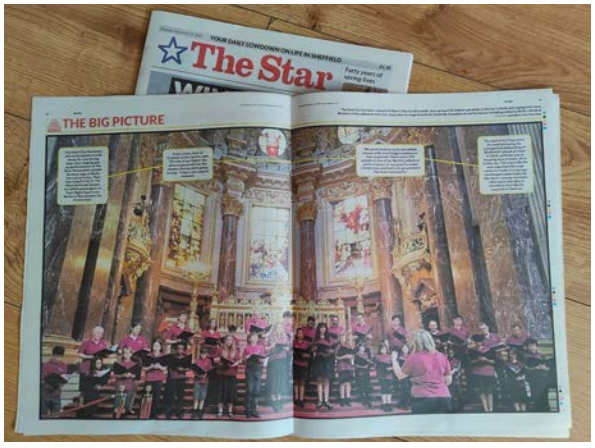
### *Communications*

We maintained communications with our Friends and other supporters through four editions of our email newsletter, with the number of subscribers increasing from 294 to 362 over the course of the year. We also maintained an active presence on social media, particularly Facebook, engaging at least weekly with over almost 1,100 followers as well as members of national groups such as the Choral Evensong Appreciation Society and Friends of Cathedral Music.

We received several mentions on Classic FM for singing for Dan Walker outside the Crucible Theatre during his coast to coast charity cycle ride in October 2024. We were also pleased that our tour to Germany in August 2025 was featured by the Sheffield Star online and through a single large photo filling the inside pages of the print edition.




*With Dan Walker from Classic FM*




*Our Berlin tour featured in the Sheffield Star*

### *Volunteers*

We benefited hugely from a wide range of people giving their time freely as volunteers to support the choir over the course of the year - thank you if you were one of them!

- **Chaperones**: In line with our safeguarding procedure, all choir rehearsals and events in which our choristers take part are supervised by at least one trained chaperone in addition to the session leaders. 18 people supported the choir as volunteer chaperones during the course of the year, 14 of whom were parents of choristers.
- **Clerks**: While many adult members of the choir have in the past earned a salary or held a financial scholarship for the high quality of their singing, all of our Clerks sing with Steel City Choristers as volunteers without payment. This year we had 11 regular Clerks and a number of other semi-regular or occasional singers.
- **Music theory volunteers**: 6 regular volunteers, plus occasional extras, supported the planning and delivery of regular group music theory sessions for our choristers.
- **Other volunteers:** 3 people provided significant regular pro bono support accompanying rehearsals, providing web hosting and technical support, and working with our boys with changing voices.
- **Advisors & Patrons**: a range of experienced and accomplished musicians and leaders provided pro bono advice and support to the Chair and trustees.
- **Trustees**: Our trustees share a passion for seeing choral music more widely sung and appreciated. They brought a diverse range of relevant skills and experience to the

leadership of the organisation. All of them volunteered their time to lead and govern the charity and many of them went above and beyond to volunteer their time and skills to support the operational management and administration of the choir, including:

- building partnerships with organisations across Sheffield and beyond
- booking our diverse schedule of performances with a wide range of different hosts
- managing relationships with chorister parents, including twice-termly meetings
- scheduling and organising our programme of youth work, including visiting speakers
- leading communications via social media, newsletters and press notices
- purchasing sheet music, and compiling orders of service and concert programmes
- managing our music library and the provision of sheet music to the choir
- administering our Friends scheme
- applying for grant funding and reporting to our funders.



***Overall Reflections on the Success of our Model***

As we continue to pioneer a new model for sustaining and diversifying access to the all-age English choral tradition, we have remained viable over the last year because we have had sufficient people to sing, sufficient people to sing for, and sufficient money to cover our costs.

We have recruited singers because:

- our culture, including our youth work, puts people at the centre of what we do and means they have fun, build friendships and feel valued
- our intensive musical education is free and first class, and offers the opportunity to sing a broad repertoire at a high standard in a wide range of churches and other venues
- we are independent and don't sing every Sunday morning, which means we are more accessible to those who want to sing but who don't want to leave their current church in order to join a choir, as well as to those who don't want to join a church at all.

We have had plenty of people to sing for because:

- churches and other communities invite us to sing for them, which means that we are not responsible for attracting a congregation or raising an audience
- we don't pass on our costs to our hosts in the form of fixed fees, which would create a barrier for the majority of the communities we serve
- we always tailor our offer to meet the needs of the churches and communities we sing for, so they feel grateful and well served.

We don't charge fees to our singers or hosts, but have raised money because:

- choristers' parents value our free musical education, and although under no obligation to give to the charity, a number do
- some of the organisations for whom we sing make a donation to thank us for our singing
- individual supporters give generously to support our charitable aims
- grant funders recognise the educational and/or artistic value of our work.

Another critical factor in the ongoing viability of the choir over the last year has been sufficient capacity to lead the organisation and administer its programme of activities. We remained highly dependent on a small number of committed volunteers going above and beyond to give much more than could be reasonably asked of their spare time to run the choir. This includes, but is not limited to our committed group of trustees.

As trustees, we are very conscious that we want the organisation to outlive our capacity to sustain our huge efforts, but that we cannot assume that the volunteers who come after us will be able to be as generous with their time. In order to secure the long term viability of the choir, a more sustainable model will need to be developed through which the workload is either shared by a larger group of volunteers or sufficient funds are raised to pay staff to lead and manage the choir under the oversight of the trustees.

Our tours to Winchester and particularly Berlin, were a strong stimulus to engage more members of the choir community in voluntary roles, particularly as chaperones and to help with community fundraising activities. We are very grateful to everyone who started helping to share the load this year and make our ambitious programme of activities possible. We look forward to further strengthening our work together as a team over the year ahead.



## 2024-25 Endorsements

**Ian Naylor, Head of Music Education in Sheffield**

*"Money just can't buy the kind of all-age musical community Steel City Choristers has created. The educational benefits are enormous, musically and socially. It's something really very special. I'm so proud to have them as one of our Music Hub partners here in Sheffield."*

**Tom Daggett, Director of Music and Schools Singing Programme, Sheffield Cathedral**

*"Steel City Choristers are going from strength to strength - it is the geographical and musical range of their performances and the impact on young lives, as well as all who hear them sing, that is really impressive. They are a gift to our city and region."*

**Lindsay Gray, former Director of the Royal School of Church Music**

*"I'd like to add my warmest congratulations to everyone involved in Steel City Choristers for everything that has been achieved during the last five years; it is remarkable!*

*Setting up a new choral group is never straightforward, but despite a number of challenges at various stages the choir has gone from strength to strength, providing invaluable singing experience for so many individuals, giving pleasure to congregations and audiences, and creating a high profile for the group, not only in Sheffield but much further afield too. Indeed, the last year has seen exceptional activity, with no less than 54 performances, including visits to Winchester and St Paul's Cathedrals as well as a first foreign tour to Germany which was clearly a wonderful experience for all involved!*

*I'd like to wish everyone connected with Steel City Choristers all the very best for the next five years; it's clear that exciting times lie ahead to match and even go beyond all of the astonishing achievements which we have seen so far!"*

# 3. Review of Finances in 2024-25

Core cost remained relatively flat compared to last year, while the addition of two week-long tours meant that our total annual expenditure rose significantly from £41,938 to £75,479. With considerable effort across the choir community and generosity from a range of funders and donors, we managed to raise a total income of £73,046. This led to a modest in-year deficit of £2,433.

## *EXPENDITURE*

Total expenditure in 2024-25 was £75,479, an increase of 80% on last year.

### Trips and Tours

The biggest driver of this year's significantly increased expenditure was our trips and tours - two week-long tours, one of which was overseas, and a day trip to London. These were not only a massive draw on our organisational capacity as an organisation, but also on our finances. In total, they accounted for £38,411 or 51% of our expenditure in 2024-25.

We made every effort to keep our tour costs to a minimum. In particular, we undertook all of the planning and organisation of the tour ourselves without the aid of a professional tour company. We also worked hard to find budget accommodation, staying in a Scout Activity Centre near Winchester costing only £9 pppn, and a Youth Hostel in Berlin that cost only £23 pppn. Although they introduced additional costs, it was important to budget for social activities while away on tour to ensure the children really enjoyed themselves, to fill the time when we were not singing, and to create opportunities for the choir to bond socially.

Some of the costs of the trip and tours we undertook in 2024-25 were incurred in advance last financial year, and some minor costs for our Berlin tour in August 2025 were not settled by the end of the month, and so will fall into next financial year. In total, across all three financial years, the full cost of this year's trip and tours was £45,240.

*The total cost of trips and tours taking place in 2024-25*

| | **Winchester**<br>Oct 24<br>£ | **London**<br>Apr 25<br>£ | **Berlin**<br>Aug 25<br>£ | **TOTAL**<br><br>**£** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Travel | 1,191 | 1,600 | 18,458 | 21,249 |
| Accommodation | 972 | - | 7,245 | 8,217 |
| Food | 1,534 | 480 | 7,349 | 9,363 |
| Musician's fees | 850 | 255 | 1,200 | 2,305 |
| Other | 1,060 | - | 3,046 | 4,106 |
| **Total** | **5,607** | **2,335** | **37,315** | **45,240** |

**Core Costs**

Deducting the tours, as well as the money that passed through our accounts on behalf of others (such as the cost of clothing ordered and paid for by choir members), remaining expenditure relating to the cost of operating the choir's core activities in and around Sheffield amounted to just over £35,000. These costs were made up of:

- 70% musicians' fees
- 11% other musical and operating costs
- 10% investment in people
- 9% other administrative costs.

We increased the hourly fees we paid to our Director of Music and other musicians in line with recommended Musician Union rates and invested more in building relationships with our Clerks. Mid-year, we also took the decision to invest more in our younger choristers by paying for our Assistant Director of Music to provide tuition during our Monday as well as our Friday rehearsals.

***INCOME***

Our aim is to develop a diverse and sustainable funding model based on income from those who recognise the high quality of our music education and the value of our work to promote and sustain the choral tradition. This enables us to remove money as a barrier to people accessing choral music by allowing the children and adults that sing with us and the host communities for whom we sing to give to the charity as they are able, rather than be charged fixed fees.



Total income in 2024-25 was £73,046. Operational income (total income less the funds received to give or spend on behalf of others), totalled £71,528 and was made up from a range of sources as follows:

- 31% - Donations
- 8% - Performance income
- 23% - Grants
- 3% - Community fundraising
- 2% - Sales
- 25% - Contributions for tours
- 8% - Gift Aid

**Donations - £22,407**

- Major donations - £10,000
- Giving from Friends of the choir - £11,146
- Other donations from individuals - £1,261

Major donations remain a very significant source of income, for which we are hugely grateful. Generous philanthropists have such a significant impact, particularly considering the effort it can take to raise equivalent funds from other sources.

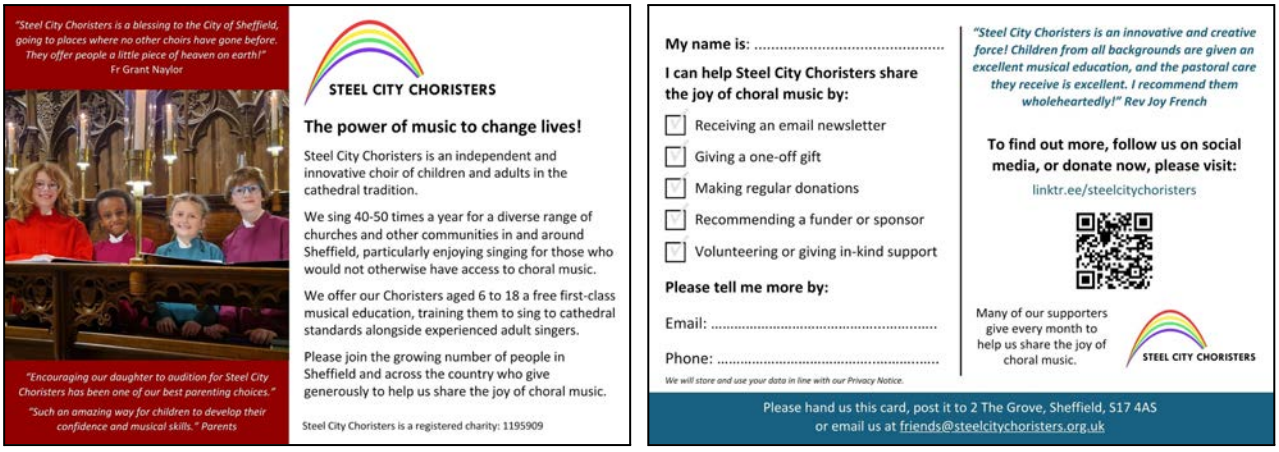
If we were not a charity and simply charged parents fees to cover the cost of running the choir, they would need to be paying over £100 a month per child, before the costs of any trips or tours. This would create a barrier to most if not all of our families. Instead, we encourage parents to give to the charity to the extent that they can afford to do so, and many do. However, we know that many parents feel that music is an expensive activity and that they chose for their child to join our choir because it provides an affordable musical education. Parents' charitable donations alone fall a long way short of funding the choir. However, together with donations from others, giving from individuals does amount to a significant source of income for the charity.

Total giving by Friends of the choir was up around £2,000 on last year's £9,275, a similar increase to the previous year, and made up of £10,427 in recurring donations plus £719 in one off gifts. Over the year, we welcomed seven new Friends that pledged regular monthly donations, one that pledged an annual donation and four that made a one-off donation. In total, over the year, 37 people gave monthly, two gave annually, and six gave a one-off donation.

| Friends of Steel City Choristers in 2024-25 |
| --- |
| Liz Arnesen, Carol Atherton, Joachim Atunwa, Chris Bowes, Vivien Bowes, Keith Brown, Chris & Kate Caroe, John & Linda Caroe, Joe Chacko, Katy Cooper, Catherine Cooper, James Cowley, Jeremy Dawson, Joy French, Andrew Horsfield, Ling Sum Hui, Virge James, Paula Jones, Clare Keppas, Tony Laycock, Roger Ledbetter, David & Barbara Mangles, Kieran Morgan, Alastair & Rachel Morris, Iain Nisbet, Gill O'Connell, Dorothy & Lee Puchala, Katharine Salmon, David Salter, Dan & Sarah Walker, Mike Warren, David Willington and 13 others. |

Ad hoc giving from other individuals fluctuates according to circumstance, and is not therefore a source of income that we can budget on. We are grateful that this year it was up significantly, at over £1,000 more than the £215 donated last year.

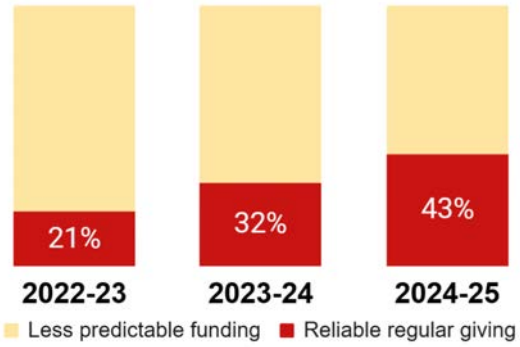
We have made slow and steady progress growing income from Friends and other donors in recent years. However, recruiting new Friends is not easy and we are aware of the need to accelerate growth in donations, to mitigate the risk of grant funding drying up over the years ahead. This year, we developed new promotional literature explaining who we are as a choir and making it as easy as possible for people to indicate how they might be able to support us.




*The literature we developed this year explaining who we are and how people can support us*

Regular giving is really the life blood of the charity for the way it provides a predictable source of income into the future. The proportion of our income (before Gift Aid and excluding contributions for

tours and other goods/services) that we receive from individuals who have made a commitment to giving regularly has grown steadily over the last three years.




Further increasing reliable regular giving from committed supporters will be a key priority for the charity in 2025-2026 as we celebrate the choir's fifth birthday and look to build a firmer foundation for the future.

**Performance income - £5,815**

- Gifts from host churches and communities - £2,531
- Fundraising concerts - £1,484
- Weddings - £1,800

Gifts from the churches and other communities that we sang for during the year was only a small fraction of our overall income. This highlights the financial barriers that exist for many communities to accessing high quality choral music, and the charitable nature of our work in sharing our music with those that are not in a position to cover or even contribute towards its actual cost.

We continued to find it challenging to balance our commitment to avoiding money being a barrier, while articulating our financial needs to our hosts. Over the course of the year, only 9 of the 25 services that we sang in and around Sheffield were followed by a financial donation from the church. The average gift was similar to last year at £170.

To help raise funds for our Berlin tour we sang three fundraising concerts during the year. The first was a Clerks' performance at the Samuel Worth Chapel in the General Cemetery. The other two were full choir concerts, in which we sang music by German and English composers, explained our purpose and mission as a choir, and described our plans for the tour. For each concert, we found and worked in partnership with a host church community that committed to supporting us by providing free use of their building and helping to raise an audience.

We sang for two weddings this year and took a booking for a third. We enjoyed sharing in each couples' big day, and are grateful for this meaningful source of income for the choir.

**Grants - £16,284**

We received £9,474 in unrestricted grants:

- Harry Bottom Charitable Trust - £2,000
- Gripple Foundation - £500

- Marsh Charitable Trust - £500
- Mildenhall Charitable Trust - £1,974
- Sheffield Bluecoat and Mount Pleasant Education Foundation - £2,000
- Sheffield Town Trust Subscription List - £1,500
- Worrall Male Voice Choir Musical Grants Foundation - £1,000

We received £6,810 in restricted grants for our tour to Berlin:

- Ecclesfield Welfare and Educational Charities - £2,700
- Hollowford Trust - £1,610
- Sheffield Church Burgesses Education Foundation - £2,500

The charity remains heavily dependent on the generous support of grant-giving Trusts and Foundations without which we would not have been able to deliver the full range of activities we planned and budgeted for in 2024-25. All of our grant fundraising was led by one of our trustees on a voluntary basis.

In 2024-25, we received grants from 10 local and national trusts and foundations, totalling £16,284. This is a significant reduction on last year's grant income of £26,707 from 14 funders, reflecting the fact that during the year, eight applications were rejected by funders that had previously supported us.

We are grateful for funding for the first time from the Harry Bottom Charitable Trust and for continued support from nine other funders. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the significance of the commitment of three funders to providing ongoing year-on-year support: the Worrall Male Voice Choir Musical Grants Foundation, the Mildenhall Charitable Trust and the Sheffield Town Trust (via their three year Subscription List).

We are aware that grant funding can never be taken for granted. While it currently provides an essential underpinning to our finances, our aim is to reduce our dependency on it over time by building up support from our own committed Friends and donors. How much time we have to do so is uncertain, but it is clear that a reduction in Trusts and Foundations' willingness to support us before we have our own reliable, regular income in place, is one of the biggest risks to the future viability of the charity. The trustees will be keeping a close eye on this risk over the year ahead in order to discern whether the eight applications that were rejected this year by previous funders are indicative of the start of a longer term trend.

**Community fundraising - £1,920**

- 100 Days of Music Making Justgiving campaign - £1,217
- Bake sale - £200
- Easy Fundraising - £157
- Other - £345

Energised by the need to raise funds for our tours, members of the choir community planned and took part enthusiastically in a range of fundraising activities over the course of the year. Our sponsored *100 Days of Music Making* brought in an additional £1,217 this year, with a bake sale and use of Easy Fundraising being the largest contributors, alongside a range of other initiatives, to a further £700 raised. The trustees are really grateful for the stronger sense of shared ownership

that has emerged this year across the choir community, particularly among parents, for raising funds for the charity.



*Home made Christmas good for sale*



*Brian Smith's original water colour*

**Income from Sales**

- Christmas Cards and prints - £1,270

We were delighted that Brian Smith, the celebrated Sheffield-based water colour artist, painted us a beautiful scene of the choir singing outside the iconic Sheffield Winter Garden, the arches of which were the inspiration for our logo. He arranged and oversaw the printing of Christmas cards and prints using the painting, which we offered for sale to members of the choir community, our audiences and wider supporters, including through a new Shop page on our website.

The total cost of commissioning the artwork, printing the cards and distributing orders amounted to £770, meaning that against sales of £1,270 we generated net income of £500.



**Contributions for Tours - £17,861**

- Contributions - £12,811
- Additional charitable donations - £5,050

While we do not charge fees to our singers over the course of the year, we did feel that it was appropriate and reasonable to ask parents of choristers to contribute, if they could, to the exceptional costs of our tours this year.

Very mindful of the need to have enough singers for a viable choir and so as not to make money a barrier to any child coming on tour, we set a suggested contribution for each tour, but also offered a lower 'supported' rate for anyone to opt into. For any families who could not afford this lower rate, we also made clear they could contribute whatever they could afford. Conversely, we also offered a higher 'supporter' rate for those who felt able to contribute more. We did not ask our musicians, adult singers or chaperones who were all giving up their annual leave to work hard all week to contribute to the cost of the tours, however many did choose to make voluntary donations.

Our suggested donation levels compared favourably to the costs we know schools often charge for their trips and, perhaps as a consequence, we were encouraged by the level of financial

contributions we received, totalling nearly £13,000. We were also very grateful for the significant voluntary financial contributions we received, which exceeded £5,000.

**Other income - £5,971**

- Gift aid on 2023-24 giving - £5,971

The contribution of Gift Aid to our income this year was very considerable, reflecting the high level of donations we received last financial year, particularly major donations. We are grateful to all our eligible donors who take the time to provide Gift Aid information with their gifts.

**Sponsorship**

We are grateful for the ongoing financial support from the Gripple Foundation this year, but have not found any other businesses to have such a progressive and proactive approach to charitable funding. Since developing an information leaflet for potential sponsors in 2021-2022 and a sponsorship page on our website in 2023-24, we have not attracted any other support from the business community. We currently lack the contacts and relationships from which this kind of support is most likely to flow, and also the capacity and time that would need to be invested to develop them.

***END-YEAR POSITION***

We ended last year with a significant surplus reflecting the effort we put into fundraising ahead of the extraordinary tour costs we anticipated this year. This enabled the trustees to start this year with sufficient confidence in our financial position to make a firm commitment to proceeding with the tours and accordingly setting a much larger annual budget than in previous years. Ongoing fundraising efforts during the year were considerable, but fell just short of our expenditure resulting in a small net deficit of £2,433, reducing the total funds held at the end of the year to £57,310.

We continue to maintain a Reserve of £20,000, equivalent to approximately six months' operational costs. In line with the Charity Commission's recommended good practice, this provides a buffer against any future significant or sudden drop in income.

The success and benefits of our trips and tours this year has strengthened trustees' commitment to pursuing similar opportunities in future years. In order to spread the significant effort of raising the necessary funds to seize such opportunities, the trustees have set aside an initial £15,000 towards the cost of future special opportunities.

The cash carried forward to support expenditure next year, in 2025-26, is therefore £22,310. This equates to just less than half of anticipated expenditure.

In light of this review of our financial position, the trustees see no uncertainty about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern in the foreseeable future. However, this judgement rests on the assumption that trustees and other volunteers continue to have the capacity and good will to provide significant management and administrative services to the Charity pro bono. This voluntary work is not taken for granted but nevertheless masks the true cost of running the choir. To secure a sustainable future, the cost of these activities may one day need to be built into the budget in full or part, so that they can be delivered by staff paid to run the organisation.

# 4. Statement of Accounts for 2024-25

These accounts cover the period from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025.

### *Income and Expenditure*

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total funds | Last year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| **Income** | | | | |
| Donations | 22,407 | - | **22,407** | 24,490 |
| Performance income | 5,815 | - | **5,815** | 3,841 |
| Grants | 9,474 | 6,810 | **16,284** | 26,707 |
| Community fundraising | 1,920 | - | **1,920** | 3,028 |
| Sales of goods | 1,270 | - | **1,270** | - |
| Contributions towards tours | 17,861 | - | **17,861** | 2,551 |
| Contributions for goods/services | 1,088 | - | **1,088** | 1,573 |
| Contributions for charitable donations | - | - | **-** | 22 |
| Gift aid on previous year's donations | 5,971 | - | **5,971** | 2,752 |
| Miscellaneous | 430 | - | **401** | 643 |
| **Total income** | 66,236 | 6,810 | **73,046** | 64,964 |
| | | | | |
| **Expenditure** | | | | |
| Director of Music fees | 16,460 | - | **16,460** | 15,775 |
| Other musician fees | 8,293 | - | **8,293** | 7,535 |
| Training | 710 | - | **710** | 505 |
| Music purchase | 1,668 | - | **1,668** | 1,456 |
| Travel | 370 | - | **370** | 112 |
| Venue hire | 2,000 | - | **2,000** | 3,050 |
| Administrative overheads | 1,121 | - | **1,121** | 1,151 |
| Communications | 755 | - | **755** | 1,357 |
| Clothing | 1,098 | - | **1,098** | 473 |
| Social events, food & drink, gifts | 3,107 | - | **3,107** | 1,992 |
| Cost of goods for sale | 770 | - | **770** | - |
| Trips & tours | 26,970 | 11,441 | **38,411** | 5,535 |
| Other specific project delivery costs | - | - | **-** | 1,579 |
| Miscellaneous | 717 | - | **717** | 1,156 |
| Charitable donations | - | - | **-** | 262 |
| **Total expenditure** | 64,038 | 11,441 | **75,479** | 41,938 |
| | | | | |
| **Net Surplus** | 2,198 | -4,631 | **-2,433** | 23,026 |

### *Assets and Liabilities*

The cash held by Steel City Choristers as at 31 August 2025 was as follows:

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total funds | Last year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Balance brought forward | 59,744 | 4,631 | 59,744 | 36,718 |
| In-year surplus | 2,198 | -4,631 | -2,433 | 23, 026 |
| **Total funds carried forward** | **57,310** | **0** | **57,310** | **59,744** |
| *of which:* | | | | |
| Reserves | 20,000 | 0 | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| Special Opportunities Fund | 15,000 | 0 | 15,000 | 0 |
| Restricted Funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| **Funds for next year** | **22,310** | **0** | **22,310** | **39,744** |

The charity holds a small stock of Christmas cards and prints for sale.

There were no liabilities and no debtors or creditors. The charity does not hold any investments.

### *Payments to Trustees*

No payments were made to trustees in 2024-25 for any work conducted as trustees.

A total of £3,941 was paid to four trustees for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenditure incurred when these could not be reasonably paid directly from the Steel City Choristers' bank account.

A total of £1,600 was paid to one trustee who undertook paid work for the charity, following all necessary procedures being followed in line with charity guidance.

# Declarations

### *Public Benefit*

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. This means that we have:

- made decisions to ensure our charity's purpose provides benefit
- managed risks of detriment or harm to our charity's beneficiaries
- made decisions about who benefits in ways that are consistent with our purpose
- made decisions to make sure any personal benefits are no more than incidental.

We have exercised our discretion:

- in accordance with our charity's purpose, and not outside of it
- for the public benefit and with regard to the commission's public benefit guidance where relevant
- in accordance with the general framework for trustee decision making.

### *Trustee Declarations*

No trustees hold title to property belonging to the charity. There are no funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others. There are no exemptions from disclosure.

### *Approval*

The trustees declare that they have approved this Trustees' Annual Report.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Signature** |  |  |
| **Name** | Kate Caroe | Jeremy Dawson |
| **Position** | Chair | Treasurer |
| **Date** | 14 November 2025 | 14 November 2025 |

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

# Independent examiner's report on the accounts

## Section A Independent Examiner's Report

| | |
|---|---|
| **Report to the trustees/directors/ members of** | Steel City Choristers |
| **On accounts for the year ended** | 31 August 2025 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Charity no.: | 1195909 | Company no.: | |

**Set out on pages**

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 August 2025

As the charity's trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act").

I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination, I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that:

- Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- The accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:** Venusia Ltd Apt 316 Wimbledon Central 21-33 Worple Road London - SW19 4BJ www.venusia.co.uk

**Date:** 01 November 2025

**Name:** Gerald Gurriet

**Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):** Association of International Accountants

**Address:** Venusia Ltd

London, SW19 4BJ

Apt 316 Wimbledon Central, 21 – 33 Worple Road


STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

| eel City Choristers | 1195909 |
|---|---|

# Receipts and payments accounts

**CC16a**

| For the period from | 9/1/2024 | To | 8/31/2025 |
|---|---|---|---|

## Section A Receipts and payments

| | Unrestricted funds to the nearest £ | Restricted funds to the nearest £ | Endowment funds to the nearest £ | Total funds to the nearest £ | Last year to the nearest £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A1 Receipts** | | | | | |
| Donations | 22,407 | - | - | 22,407 | 24,490 |
| Performance income | 5,815 | - | | 5,815 | 3,841 |
| Grants | 9,474 | 6,810 | - | 16,284 | 26,707 |
| Community fundraising | 1,920 | - | | 1,920 | 3,028 |
| Sales of goods | 1,270 | - | | 1,270 | - |
| Contributions towards tours | 17,861 | | | 17,861 | 2,551 |
| Contributions for goods/services | 1,088 | - | - | 1,088 | 930 |
| Contributions for charitable donations | - | - | - | - | 22 |
| Gift aid on previous year's donations | 5,971 | - | | 5,971 | 2,752 |
| Miscellaenous | 430 | | | 430 | 643 |
| ***Sub total*** *(Gross income for AR)* | 66,236 | 6,810 | - | 73,046 | 64,964 |
| **A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).** | | | | | |
| | - | - | - | - | |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| ***Sub total*** | - | - | - | - | - |
| ***Total receipts*** | 66,236 | 6,810 | - | 73,046 | 64,964 |
| **A3 Payments** | | | | | |
| Director of Music fees | 16,460 | - | | 16,460 | 15,775 |
| Other musician fees | 8,293 | - | | 8,293 | 7,535 |
| Training | 710 | - | | 710 | 505 |
| Music purchase and printing | 1,668 | - | | 1,668 | 1,456 |
| Travel | 370 | - | | 370 | 112 |
| Venue hire | 2,000 | - | | 2,000 | 3,050 |
| Administrative overheads | 1,121 | - | | 1,121 | 1,151 |
| Communications | 755 | - | | 755 | 1,357 |
| Clothing | 1,098 | - | | 1,098 | 473 |
| Social events, food & drink, gifts | 3,107 | - | | 3,107 | 1,992 |
| Cost of goods for sale | 770 | | | 770 | - |
| Trips & tours | 26,970 | 11,441 | | 38,411 | 5,535 |
| Other specific project delivery costs | - | - | | - | 1,579 |
| Miscellaneous | 717 | - | | 717 | 1,156 |
| Charitable donations | - | - | | - | 262 |
| ***Sub total*** | 64,038 | 11,441 | - | 75,479 | 41,938 |
| **A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)** | | | | | |
| | - | - | - | - | |
| | - | - | - | - | |
| ***Sub total*** | - | - | - | - | - |
| ***Total payments*** | 64,038 | 11,441 | - | 75,479 | 41,938 |
| ***Net of receipts/(payments)*** | 2,198 | - 4,631 | - | - 2,433 | 23,026 |
| **A5 Transfers between funds** | - | - | - | - | - |
| **A6 Cash funds last year end** | 55,112 | 4,631 | - | 59,744 | 36,718 |
| ***Cash funds this year end*** | 57,310 | - | - | 57,310 | 59,744 |

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

### B1 Cash funds

| Categories | Details | Unrestricted funds to nearest £ | Restricted funds to nearest £ | Endowment funds to nearest £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cash | 22,310 | - | - |
| | Reserves | 20,000 | - | - |
| | Special opportunities fund | 15,000 | - | - |
| | ***Total cash funds*** | 57,310 | - | - |
| | (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s)) | OK | OK | OK |

### B2 Other monetary assets

| Details | Unrestricted funds to nearest £ | Restricted funds to nearest £ | Endowment funds to nearest £ |
|---|---|---|---|
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |

### 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 liability relates | Amount due (optional) | When due (optional) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | - | |
| | | - | |
| | | - | |
| | | - | |
| | | - | |

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

| Signature | Print Name | Date of approval |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

# Independent examiner's report on the accounts

## Section A Independent Examiner's Report

| | |
|---|---|
| **Report to the trustees/directors/ members of** | Steel City Choristers |
| **On accounts for the year ended** | 31 August 2025 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Charity no.: | 1195909 | Company no.: | |

**Set out on pages**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 August 2025

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act").

I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination, I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that:

- Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- The accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:** Venusia Ltd Apt 316 Wimbledon Central 21-33 Worple Road London - SW19 4BJ www.venusia.co.uk

**Date:** 01 November 2025

**Name:** Gerald Gurriet

**Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):** Association of International Accountants

**Address:** Venusia Ltd

London, SW19 4BJ

Apt 316 Wimbledon Central, 21 – 33 Worple Road

**STEEL CITY CHORISTERS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1195909

# Accounts

STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

# Trustees' Annual Report

**For the period**

**1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024**




**Charity name: Steel City Choristers**

**Charity number: 1195909**

**Principal address: 2 The Grove, Totley, S17 4AS**

This report is kindly sponsored by **A&R Tradeprint Ltd**




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Located on the corner of Broadfield Road and Abbeydale Road

# Steel City Choristers

## 2023-24 HEADLINES

1. We ended the year with 27 children aged 6-18 and 10 regular adult singers.

2. Our community is diverse: 30% of our children don't speak English as their first language at home, 44% are non-white, 63% are female, 15% have a special need.

3. We sang a full and varied programme of 42 performances, including 24 church services and 18 other concerts or events reaching 4,300 people.

4. We celebrated our 100th performance at Sheffield's iconic Crucible in June 2024 and ended the year with our total number of performances to date at 106.

5. We sang for 18 churches and 12 other hosts, 17 of these were new hosts bringing the total number of host communities we have sung for to date to 51.

6. We sang for the first time for St Marie's Catholic Cathedral in Sheffield and for the Catholic Diocese of Hallam, and sang joint services with the choirs of Sheffield's Anglican Cathedral and Doncaster Minster.

7. We collaborated to deliver joint performances with Sheffield Oratorio Chorus, Sheffield Youth Orchestra and the choir of St John's Church, Ranmoor.

8. The choir went on day trips to sing services in Stockport and Castleton, and our Clerks enjoyed a weekend away to sing at Ross-on-Wye Parish Church.

9. We introduced new group music theory lessons for all Choristers and small group singing tuition for our younger Choristers.

10. We secured significant profile through two double-page spreads in the local press, and engaged regularly with nearly 1,000 followers on Facebook.

11. Operational income of £63,369 was from grants (42%), major donations (24%), Friends (15%), hosts (6%), and other sources (13%).

12. In-year operational costs of £37,430 were up around £5,000 mainly due to rising Musicians' Union rates, additional singing tuition, and the costs of our *Reasons to Sing!* concert and performance of the Bach *St Matthew Passion*.

13. Overheads were low, with 85% of expenditure directly associated with our musical activities and only 15% on other costs; largely due to significant pro bono support for the administration and management of the choir.

14. Steel City Choristers remains a going concern, ending the year with 6 months' reserves and a healthy surplus to support future costs.

# Report of the Trustees for the year ending 31 August 2024

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report and independently examined accounts for our financial year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.

## Chair's Report

Producing this annual report has helped us to step back and take stock. Lifting our heads out of the day-to-day has helped us see more clearly the journey that we're on, both in terms of how far we've come and also where we may be heading. So I hope you enjoy reading this latest chapter in the story of Steel City Choristers, about how we have journeyed through the academic year from September 2023: our third year as a charity.

In summary, if chapter one of our story from 2021-2 was about us *establishing our model*, and chapter two in 2022-23 was about us *expanding our activities*, then this latest chapter in 2023-24 feels like it has primarily been about Steel City Choristers demonstrating its *potential to endure.*

It was suggested to me towards the end of last year that a choir like ours, with its particular origins, "might have a certain lifespan" as its founding members' need to express their common identity begins to fade over time. In contrast, I hope that you will read this report and get a sense of Steel City Choristers as an increasingly robust and lively charity that is delivering significant public benefit around Sheffield and beyond, and one that has the potential to continue doing so for years to come.

Creating a sustainable organisation is no small task, and we can never take our future for granted. So I'm cautious about over-claiming, particularly given we are only three years old, but I do want to shine a light on the fruit of the labours of everyone involved in Steel City Choristers. We are an amazing community, we enjoy our work and together we are achieving so much: recruiting and educating our choristers, expanding and developing our performance schedule, and raising the funding to make it all possible. I'll say just a little here about each of those three areas, and you can read more in the body of this report.

We had 27 children singing with us at the end of the year, most of whom joined us through word of mouth. They are from diverse backgrounds, for example almost a third of them speak a language other than English at home. This year, we've developed our provision for both our Senior Choristers and our Juniors, and introduced additional singing tuition for our newest choristers as well as small-group music theory sessions. 80% of our repertoire is sacred choral music, while the other 20% is fun choral arrangements of popular songs. Our social and youth work activities remain a significant feature of our community, and we particularly enjoyed our largest ever Quiz and Chips evening!

Having nearly doubled our number of performances from our first to our second year, we sustained the intensity of this schedule and performed 42 times in 2023-24, including celebrating our 100th performance. It is not only the number of performances over the last year that has been significant, but also the variety, scale and reach of what we've been able to undertake. We have sung for an Anglican Diocesan Eco Church service and a Catholic Diocesan Safeguarding service; we delivered a wonderful, orchestrated devotional performance of the Bach St Matthew Passion in partnership with the choir of St John's Church Ranmoor; and we performed to a capacity audience of around 1,000 at the Crucible Theatre in aid of youth homelessness charity, Roundabout. We

also completed our second *Reasons to Sing!* project with a packed out community concert at St Mary's Bramall Lane attended by the Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council as well as the Master Cutler's wife and the Director of Music from Sheffield Cathedral.

Demand from churches and other hosts continued to grow. We served a total of 17 new hosts during the year and ended the year with an almost full schedule already booked for 2024-25, as well as a number of other bookings up to two years in advance. Our forward schedule over the next year includes many local engagements as well as bookings to sing services at Winchester Cathedral, Southwell Minster, and St Paul's Cathedral, as well as Berlin Cathedral as part of a week-long choir tour.

We couldn't achieve all this without the funding to make it possible. I'm hugely grateful for the income we've received from our Friends, from major donations and from a growing range of Trusts and Foundations (all listed on our homepage). The wider choir community has this year also mobilised behind our forthcoming tours through bake sales, yard sales, sponsored music making and the like. The net result was our highest level of annual income yet, which enabled us to not only cover the costs of our activity over the course of year but, at the end of the year, increase our reserves to protect our resilience and carry forward a healthy balance towards future costs.

And the story doesn't finish here. With exciting plans for next year come increased costs, and with every opportunity comes the effort needed to seize them. Which brings me back to the huge commitment of our Trustees and other volunteers, many of whom give far more than could be reasonably expected of them, and in so doing mask the true cost of running the choir. I know we can't take those efforts for granted, and we may in future need to increase our income still further to be able to pay for what we currently receive pro bono. A priority for me as Chair of Trustees is to champion the innovative approach we have developed to sustaining and sharing the English Choral Tradition, and advocate for us when that means we fall outside of the establishment's strategies and models of funding.

We are incredibly grateful to all those who provide moral, practical or financial support to help us engage and train children in the choral tradition, and to share our singing with an increasingly diverse range of churches and other communities who wouldn't otherwise have access to choral music.

Thank you very much for your interest and for making the time to read this report. I hope you enjoy what you read.



**Kate Caroe**
Chair of Trustees

# 1. Objectives and Activities of the Charity

### *Our charitable purposes*

The purposes of the charity are:

1. For the public benefit, to advance education and training of children and young people, particularly those living in or educated in Sheffield and the surrounding area, in the subject of music and in particular choral music, primarily but not exclusively by:
    a. creating opportunities for children, young people and adults to sing alongside each other to the highest musical standards; and
    b. promoting and delivering musical and choral education and training to children and young people, regardless of their socio-economic or ethnic background and irrespective of their prior experience.
2. To advance public education in and appreciation of music and in particular choral music and related activities in all their aspects particularly in Sheffield and the surrounding area, primarily but not exclusively by presenting public performances and producing digital content, particularly for communities that would not otherwise have access to choral music.

### *About Steel City Choristers*

Steel City Choristers is an independent and innovative choir of children and adults in the cathedral tradition. We have child Choristers singing the treble line and experienced adult Clerks singing alto, tenor and bass.

We are passionate about the power of music to change lives and have been working hard to develop a model to help sustain and promote excellence in all-age choral music in and around Sheffield since the closure of the city's cathedral choir in 2020. We now serve a diverse range of churches and other communities, particularly enjoying singing for those who would not otherwise have access to choral music. We also deliver curriculum-linked singing workshops in schools and communities.

We have quickly developed a strong track record and reputation for delivering high quality music education to children and young people in Sheffield. Operating an independent, cathedral-style and cathedral-quality choir without the resources of a cathedral music foundation has been recognised by the Precentor of Ripon Cathedral as a "phenomenal achievement".

A short video trailer describing our work is available on our homepage at steelcitychoristers.org.uk.

### *Our musical education*

Singing with Steel City Choristers is open to boys and girls from Year 2 to Year 13, subject to an informal audition. We are passionate about making a high quality musical education through the choral tradition as accessible as possible to children regardless of their background or prior musical experience, so we do not charge any fees to our Choristers and we welcome children of all faiths and none.

We aim to inspire and train our Choristesr to sing to the standard of a cathedral choir. They show commendable fortitude by committing around 200 hours a year to the choir: including twice-weekly term-time rehearsals, fortnightly 1:1 singing lessons, group music theory sessions and over 40 performances a year. We have special provision for boys with changing voices, and also for our Juniors to help them develop a firm foundation of musical skills before they progress into the main choir as Probationers.

Singing alongside experienced adult volunteers greatly enhances our children's musical experience, stretching their aspirations and offering them a wide range of positive role models. We offer up to twelve years of amazing training as part of an all-age musical community, helping boys and girls as young as six to find and develop their voice and stretching our most senior Choristers to sing to top standards. This offers a supportive pathway to really high quality musicianship and a lifelong love of singing.

We give the children the opportunity to experience a wide range of church traditions and other performance venues, enlarging their worldview and life experience, and we create time in our weekly rehearsals for our Choristers to explore and talk about the historical and musical context of the music that they sing.

In recent years we have been privileged to have been able to give our Choristers the opportunity to work with English Touring Opera, members of The Sixteen, Hilary Davan Wetton (Military Wives Choirs and London Mozart Players), Neil Taylor (former Director of Music at Sheffield Cathedral and accompanist for BBC Young Musician of the Year) and Ellie Slorach (Director of Kantos Chamber Choir and conductor at the BBC Proms 2024).

As well as musical skills and the benefits of singing for mental and physical well-being, our Choristers develop confidence, emotional resilience, teamwork, commitment and concentration skills that will prepare them well for life. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation (Arts Participation 2021) has found music can not only build children's character, support their personal development, and boost their confidence, but it can also accelerate academic progress in reading, writing and mathematics by up to three additional months. Further evidence for the benefits of singing have been set out by Opera North and Sing Up.

***Who we sing for***

We are an independent choir that serves a wide range of churches and other communities in and around Sheffield, spanning the sacred and secular divide by serving all those who appreciate the artistic and spiritual value of our music.

High quality choral music has a transcendent quality that brings a wide range of benefits to the listener. This is recognised and reflected in many patterns of sacred worship and we are pleased to be able to share our music as part of the worship in an increasing number of churches. These benefits are also enjoyed by many people in non-religious settings. Wherever we sing we know our music can help meet emotional and spiritual needs.

In line with our roots in the English choral repertoire, the majority of our engagements are leading worship in churches. We believe music can be a powerful vehicle for worship, creating a space for personal contemplation and helping people celebrate life and be present in the moment. Our aim is therefore to:

- provide choral music to churches who no longer have a choir of their own;
- promote choral music to churches from other musical traditions; abd
- enhance choral music for churches who want our support to sing more ambitious repertoire.

The diverse range of over 25 churches that we have sung for therefore includes those in the choral tradition, as well as those for whom choral music is a new and welcome addition to their worship (see a full list on the churches page on our website). We sing services of Mattins, Eucharist and Evensong as well as Songs of Praise style services to celebrate music as a form of worship.

We also enjoy singing for a variety of non-church events, including to help raise funds for other local charities.

We take the choir on trips and tours away from Sheffield to expand our musical horizons and help deepen relationships across the choir community. This includes day trips to places such as Bradford, Doncaster, Stockport, Southwell and London, as well as residential tours - the first of which was a weekend in Ripon in 2023, and we will tour to Winchester and Berlin in 2024-25.

We enjoy collaborating with other choirs and musicians, and have performed with the choirs of Sheffield Cathedral, Doncaster Minster and St John's Church Ranmoor as well as with the Sheffield Oratorio Chorus and Sheffield Youth Orchestra.

Wherever we sing, and whoever we sing with, we work collaboratively with our hosts to understand their needs and tailor our contribution to their service or event accordingly.

***Our focus on making choral music more accessible***

We believe in the power of music to change lives and want more people to benefit from its beauty and joy, and the spiritual and emotional wellbeing that it brings. We aim to make high quality choral music more accessible by taking it to a wide range of communities; in particular we enjoy working with communities with less cultural and social capital. We have developed innovative projects, such as *Reasons to Sing!* to engage new and more diverse audiences in church choral music.

***School workshops***

Our singing workshops in schools, linked to the Key Stage 2 Model Music Curriculum, aim to inspire primary age children to sing and join choirs. Our music education resources are designed for non-music specialists to enable them to follow up on our sessions and continue to help children develop key musical skills. We signpost children to local singing opportunities, including through information about Steel City Choristers and how to arrange an informal audition to join us.

***People involved in our organisation***

Steel City Choristers does not employ any staff. Our core music education programme is delivered by four freelance musicians: our Director of Music, two singing teachers and our Junior lead. We use freelance accompanists as necessary for specific performances each year. Volunteers play a critical role in the governance of the charity as well as the leadership, management and operation of the choir.

***Funding our activities***

Compared to the quality of our provision, our core operating costs are modest and come with few overheads. Our charity benefits significantly from the goodwill of the Trustees and a wide range of volunteers who give their time and skills pro bono to support the planning, delivery and administration of the choir's activities. So our costs relate mainly to the fees that we pay, based on Musicians' Union rates, to our professional Director of Music and the other musicians who are key to the high quality music education and performances we deliver.

The core cost of running the choir equates to around £120 per month, per chorister. This works out at around £7 per hour of contact time.

We do not charge fees to the children or adults to sing with us, or to the hosts for whom we sing. This means that money will never be a barrier to people accessing choral music. Instead, our aim is to develop a diverse and sustainable funding model based on income from those who recognise the high quality of our music education and the value of our work to promote and sustain the cathedral choral tradition.

Parents of Choristers are encouraged to give to the charity to the extent that they can afford to do so. However, we know that many parents feel that music is an expensive activity and that they chose for their child to join our choir because it provides an affordable musical education.

Giving from parents and other individual donors, mainly via our Friends Scheme, together with gifts we may receive from churches and others for whom we sing, fall a long way short of the costs of running the choir. The charity is therefore heavily dependent on the generous support of a wide range of grant giving Trusts and Foundations - all acknowledged on the homepage of our website.

***Find out more***

Further information about our activities is available on our website, including:

- about the choir, its origin and unique ways of working;
- our calendar of opportunities to hear us sing;
- how to join our choir;
- all previous editions of our newsletter;
- our offer to churches, including the service of Evensong;
- our work in schools and our free music education resources;
- our innovative *Lament* and *Reasons to Sing!* projects;
- how we can sing for weddings as well as community, business and other events; and
- our offer to potential sponsors.

## 2. Achievements and Performance of the Charity in 2023-24

***Overview***

2023-24 was a strong year for Steel City Choristers across the board, including in relation to our recruitment and retention of Choristers, the development of our musical education, and the full and diverse schedule of performances we delivered.

***Our Choristers***

Over the year, we recruited 8 new children to the choir - one as a Chorister and seven as Juniors. Four Juniors progressed to become Probationers in the main choir and went on during the year to be given their surplices and welcomed as full Choristers. At the end of the year we had 27 children in the choir: 17 Choristers, 8 Juniors, and 2 Changing Voices:

- 30% speak a language other than English at home;
- 44% are an ethnicity other than white;
- 63% are female;
- 15% identify as having a special need (learning, medical or physical);
- 93% are educated in the state sector or at home; and
- they live in 9 postcode areas of Sheffield.

We held a *Be a Chorister at Christmas* event as part of an Advent carol service to give children the opportunity to experience performing with the choir. We also told children about the choir as part of our work in schools. The majority of our new recruits were, however, introduced to the choir by word of mouth.

We funded free social events each term to help our Choristers build friendships and feel part of the wider choir community, such as trips to go bowling and ice skating. We also held our annual Quiz and Chips event at which over 70 people from across the choir community joined together for an informal instrumental concert from Choristers, followed by fish and chips (non-fish options were available!) and a team-based, multi-round, pub-style quiz.

Recent feedback from parents of Choristers via our annual survey, included:

> *"Steel City Choristers provides a wonderful musical education for children and young people, and is a great community."*
>
> *"We are very happy with the excellent singing opportunities Steel City Choristers provides and are grateful to all those who enable the choir to be a safe, friendly and motivating environment for our child to be in."*
>
> *"Such an amazing way for children to develop their confidence and musical skills."*
>
> *"Encouraging our daughter to audition for the Steel City Choristers has been one of our best parenting choices. She is more of a pop and rap sort of girl but now embraces traditional choral music and can often be heard singing the Magnificat at home. She has made friends and grown in confidence in both herself and her voice and for that and much more we are grateful."*

***Our Music Education***

Our twice-weekly rehearsals provided our Choristers with up to four hours a week of fun and engaging musical education for twelve weeks each term. We also rehearsed for around an hour directly before each of our performances.

This year we moved our youth work from the end of the rehearsal to the middle so that 40 minutes of singing was followed by a break for 20 minutes of youth work, before another 30 minutes of rehearsal. During the year, we also introduced a separate sectional session in this final 30 minutes for older choristers (Year 9 upwards), led by Jeremy Dawson. These focused sessions have allowed our Senior Choristers to develop a sense of identity as a group and to work at a pace they are comfortable with, while conveying added responsibility onto younger Choristers in their rehearsal as they can no longer rely on the leadership of the older ones. Friday rehearsals remained in the same general pattern, with a separate sectional for our teenage boys with changing voices, and with adult Clerks joining the Choristers for the final 30 minutes of their rehearsal before having an hour's rehearsal of their own.

The majority of our Choristers over the age of 9 who don't already have their own singing teacher took up our offer of a free 20 minute singing lesson with our Vivien Pike every fortnight in term time. Some choose to pay to increase their lessons to 30 or 40 minutes. In addition, this year we appointed Sarah Carroll to provide singing tuition to our younger choristers in small groups every week during Friday rehearsals. Both Sarah and Vivien's teaching has helped our children become more confident hearing their own voice and develop excellent singing technique. We were delighted for Vivien this year, and for the second time, one of her pupils won BBC Chorister of the Year! We have actively sought to integrate our singing teachers more fully into our wider work. Vivien has attended rehearsals in order to observe the children singing in the context of choir, and we have held a parents' meeting with both singing teachers so that parents could ask questions and hear about their work.

Our work with Juniors, led by Kate Caroe is flourishing. Eight children have enjoyed weekly sessions each Monday, mainly focused around fun Kodaly-based singing activities, but also helping them learn a small number of pieces to perform with the main choir. This year, we reduced the number of performances that our Juniors are expected to attend to roughly one each half term and this has helped to improve attendance, especially for those who were finding it a big step to start singing in public. Our Director of Music, Eleanor Jarvis, works with our Juniors for 20 minutes each week so that they can start building a relationship with her before joining the main choir.

Our work with boys with changing voices led by Jeremy Dawson has continued throughout the year, in parallel to Choristers' Friday rehearsals. One of our Changing Voices has sung regularly with the adult Clerks, joining both Clerks' rehearsals and Clerks-only performances.

From September 2023, we introduced new group music theory sessions in which a group of enthusiastic volunteers from the choir community led by choir mum, Julie Doubleday of Doubleday Music, has worked with our Director of Music to support our Choristers to progress their understanding of music theory at whatever level they are at - ranging from complete beginners to those working beyond Grade 5. We ran four blocks of four sessions over the course of the year. The skills and commitment of our volunteers means that we have been able to turn what, for many, can be a challenging part of a musical education into a fun and enjoyable activity.

Other specific highlights of our Choristers' musical education this year included the opportunity to:

- learn and perform the Bach *St Matthew Passion* accompanied by a full orchestra;
- perform to an audience of nearly 1,000 at the Crucible Theatre, singing our own arrangements of Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* and *The Bare Necessities*;
- perform Christmas concerts alongside the Sheffield Oratorio Chorus and together with the Sheffield Youth Orchestra;
- work with and learn from Neil Taylor through a morning of workshops followed by an informal concert for parents;
- work with and learn from Ellie Slorach who joined a rehearsal to coach our Director of Music; and
- learn arrangements of six popular songs and perform them with users of the St Mary's Bramall Lane Social Supermarket in our *Reasons to Sing!* concert alongside six paired songs from our church repertoire.

Commenting on our musical education this year, Tom Daggett, Director of Music and Schools Singing Programme at Sheffield Cathedral said:

> *"Since coming to Sheffield in 2023, I have been impressed by the commitment of Steel City Choristers to deliver a high-quality musical education for the children in their care. Through their work, more children in Sheffield are able to access the many benefits which a choral education provides. This weekly work includes a robust introduction to music theory, alongside vocal pedagogy and the learning of a wide range of music. This is supplemented by school workshops and community collaborations, broadening the reach and impact of the choir among a wide range of constituents – including both students and teachers. An admirable feature of the Steel City Choristers is their mission to travel to churches and communities across the region, bringing choral music to those who would not otherwise likely encounter it. The educational, social, and spiritual benefits of this for children and adults is well documented. Steel City Choristers help to address a dearth of opportunities to engage with choral music, and I commend them to you for support as an important educational outfit in Sheffield."*

And Ian Naylor, Head of Music Education at Sheffield Music Hub, said:

> *"As Head of the Sheffield Music Hub I have watched with interest as Steel City Choristers has quickly established itself as a provider of high quality musical education to children in Sheffield. It is a real testimony to the quality of the choir that they have been accepted to sing over the coming year at such prestigious places as Winchester, St Paul's and Berlin Cathedrals. The way in which the Trustees are seizing these three opportunities is a real demonstration of their commitment to offering children inspiring and stretching musical opportunities."*

***Our Repertoire***

Our twice-weekly rehearsal schedule enabled our Choristers to learn a wide repertoire. 80% of the pieces we sang in 2023-24 were sacred repertoire typical of a cathedral choir or active parish church choir. This included several settings of liturgical office texts including settings of the Eucharist, canticles and responses for Evensong, as well as psalms and a wide variety of anthems. We also sang larger and more challenging works including the Bach *St Matthew Passion* and

Fauré *Requiem*. We actively chose pieces by contemporary composers, as well as several by black and female composers including Amy Beach, Sally Beamish, Eleanor Daley, Imogen Holst, Sasha Johnson Manning, Kathryn Rose and Undine Smith-Moore.

Our full sacred repertoire list (other than psalms and hymns) was as follows:

**2023-24 Sacred Music Repertoire**

**Anthems**

- Beach - *Peace I Leave with You*
- Bruckner - *Christus Factus Est*
- Byrd - *Sing Joyfully*
- Casals - *O Vos Omnes*
- Chilcott - *God So Loved the World*
- Daley - *Upon your Heart*
- Eccard - *When to the Temple Mary Went*
- Elgar - *They are at Rest* (Clerks)
- Gardiner - *Evening Hymn*
- Gibbons - *Almighty and Everlasting God*
- Gibbons - *Drop, Drop Slow Tears*
- Goodall - *The Lord's my Shepherd*
- Holst - *A Hymne to Christ*
- John IV of Spain - *Crux Fidelis*
- Lotti - *Crucifixus*
- Mendelssohn - *When Jesus our Lord*
- Nardone - *I Give you a New Commandment*
- Parry - *My Soul, There is a Country*
- Parsley - *Lamentations* (Clerks)
- Purcell - *Hear my Prayer*
- Rachmaninov - *Bogoroditse Devo*
- Smith-Moore - *We Shall Walk*
- Stopford - *Do not be Afraid*
- Stopford - *In my Father's House*
- Tallis - *If Ye Love Me*
- Tallis - *Lamentations* (Clerks)
- Tallis - *O Lord, Give Thy Holy Spirit*
- Victoria - O Quam Gloriosum
- Wesley - *Blessed be the God & Father*
- Wood - *View me, Lord*
- Wood - *Oculi Omnium*
- Victoria - *O Quam Gloriosum*

**Mass settings**

- Lotti - *Messa del Primo Tuono*
- Stanford in C and F
- Darke in F
- Byrd - *Mass for Three Voices* (Clerks)

**Canticles**

- Beach - *Nunc Dimittis*
- Brewer in D
- Byrd - *Fauxbourdon Magnificat* (Clerks)
- Gibbons - Short Service
- Howells - St Paul's Service
- Noble in B minor
- Rose
- Stanford in Bb

**Responses**

- Smith
- Ayleward
- Johnson Manning

**Advent and Christmas**

- Beamish - *In the Stillness*
- Britten - *A Hymn to the Virgin*
- Britten - *A New Year Carol*
- Byrd - *Ecce Virgo Concipiet*
- Cornelius - *The Three Kings*
- Darke - *In the Bleak Midwinter*
- Gardner - *Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing-day*
- Howells - *Here is the Little Door*
- Johnson Manning - *A Miracle*
- Mathias - *Sir Christemas*
- Rutter - *Shepherd's Pipe Carol*

**Other**

- Bach - *St Matthew Passion*
- Fauré - *Requiem*

We also sang arrangements (mainly our own, written by Jeremy Dawson and Timothy Peters) of a number of popular songs as part of our work to make choral singing more accessible to a wider audience.

| **2023-24 Popular Music Repertoire** | |
|---|---|
| **Arranged by Jeremy Dawson:**<br>● *Bare Necessities* - Terry Gilkyson<br>● *Bohemian Rhapsody* - Queen<br>● *Fly me to the Moon* - Bart Howard<br>● *Mr Blue Sky* - Jeff Lynne<br>● *When Santa got stuck up the Chimney* - Billy Moore<br>● *You've got a Friend* - Carole King<br>**Arranged by Keith Roberts:**<br>● *White Christmas* - Irving Berlin | **Arranged by Timothy Peters:**<br>● *Count on Me* - Bruno Mars<br>● *Father and Son* - Cat Stephens<br>● *God will make a Way* - Don Moen<br>● *Hi Ho Silver Lining* - English & Weiss<br>● *Mama* - Spice Girls<br>● *This is me* - Paul & Pasek<br>● *Walking on Sunshine* - Katrina & the Waves<br>● *Wonderful World* - Thiele & Weiss |

***Our Youth Work***

We continued to build in time for youth work during our Monday rehearsals each week. Since the youth worker attached to the church where we rehearse left her role in September 2023, we have organised and led our own youth work sessions. Over the course of the year, the Choristers enjoyed a wide range of youth work activities, including:

- regular discussions about the peaks and pits of our holidays;
- discussions prompted by the themes of our *Reasons to Sing!* songs;
- sessions using OutoftheBox stories to explore Remembrance, Advent, Epiphany, and Candlemas as well as how we can help each other and support our wellbeing;
- sessions exploring the role of a chorister, how to behave appropriately in church, and how to process in and out;
- discussion about the Roman Catholic practice of venerating the cross and its place in the Chrism Mass and Easter Triduum to prepare for singing a Good Friday Service in St Marie's Cathedral;
- hearing from and talking with guests, including from Roundabout (a youth homelessness charity) and Natalie Fooks (BBC Chorister of the Year 2023); and
- planning fundraising activities for our forthcoming tours to Winchester and Berlin.

***Our Hosts***

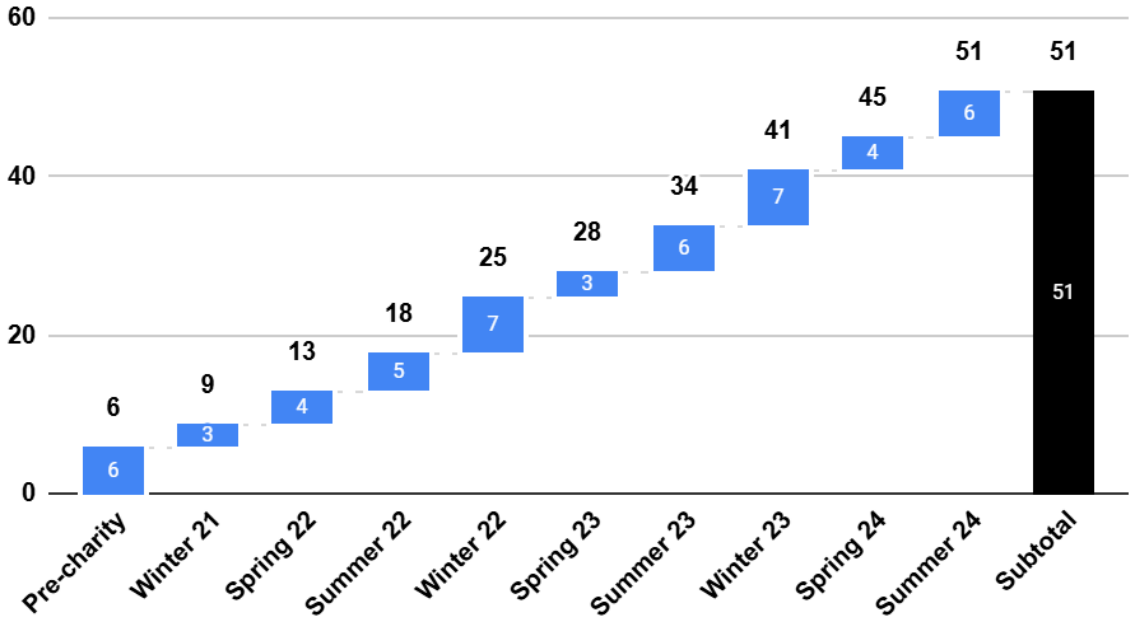
We sang for a total of 30 different host communities in 2023-24. 17 of these were hosts for whom we sang for the first time, bringing the total number of hosts that we have sung for by the end of the year to 51.

The diversity of the communities we sang for reflects our commitment to sharing choral music as widely as possible. This year's calendar included:

- our first service for St Marie's Catholic Cathedral in Sheffield as well as a diocesan service for the Catholic Diocese of Hallam;
- services jointly with the choirs of Sheffield's Anglican Cathedral and Doncaster Minster;
- services for a total of 18 different churches or Cathedrals located in and around Sheffield and in Ross-on-Wye, Stockport, and Castleton;

- performances at the Crucible Theatre, IKEA Sheffield, our local pub The Rawson Spring, and High Green Primary School; and
- performances in the Bishop of Sheffield's garden and at two community allotments.

**New Host Communities for whom we have sung, by term**




The following feedback was received from hosts via our annual feedback survey:

**Fr Grant Naylor, St Matthew's Church, Carver Street**
*"Steel City Choristers is a blessing to the City of Sheffield, often going to places where no other choirs have gone before. They offer people a little piece of heaven on earth!"*

**David Willington, Director of Music, St Mark's Church, Broomhill**
*"Steel City Choristers have always been excellent in supporting our worship at St Mark's. In particular they've always been very flexible in fitting in with how we do things."*

**Denise Lawrenson, Roundabout, youth homelessness charity**
*"It was an absolute pleasure working with you all at Steel City Choristers. The audience and all of us were blown away by your incredible performances. Thank you for sharing you amazing talent to help raise essential funds for youth homelessness."*

**Joy French, Vicar of St John's Church Owlerton**
*"Steel City Choristers are an innovative and creative force! Children from all backgrounds are given an excellent musical education, and the pastoral care they receive is excellent. I recommend them wholeheartedly!"*

**Nick Waterfield, PXI social inclusion charity**
*"Steel City Choristers bring a quality of music and experience to people and places where it is not always easily accessible."*

**Fiona Law, Director of Music, St Matthew's Church, Carver Street**
*"Steel City Choristers tirelessly supports and enhances many church music settings, always creating a memorable experience. Their work with young people will help produce the musicians of tomorrow."*

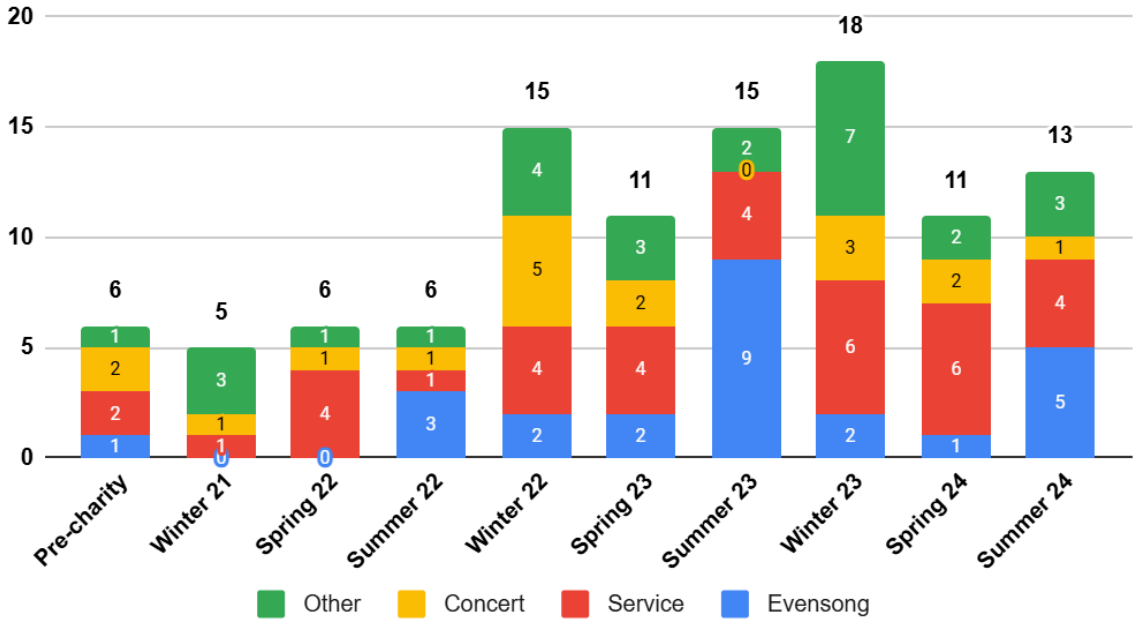
**Tom Daggett, Director of Music at Sheffield Cathedral**
*"Steel City Choristers have enriched many people's lives this year and it has been a blessing to welcome them to sing with us at Epiphany and in Petertide. They offer something unique to Sheffield."*

### *Our Performances*

Steel City Choristers sang a full and varied range of performances in 2023-24. We maintained a schedule of similar intensity to that of the previous year, which was itself a significant increase on our first year as a charity.

Over the year we sang in public a total of 42 times: 24 church services and 18 other concerts or events (compared to 41 engagements: 25 services and 16 other events in 2022-23). By the end of the year, the total number of performances we have delivered as a choir reached 106. Our 100th performance in June 2024 was for *A Night at the Musicals,* a variety performance at the Crucible Theatre in aid of Roundabout, a youth homelessness charity.

**Singing Engagements, by term and type**




Our 42 singing engagements were as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8 Sep 2023 | St Bartholomew's Church | OutoftheBox conference |
| 2 | 9 Sep 2023 | Sheffield Cathedral | Diocesan Eco service |
| 3 | 17 Sep 2023 | St Andrew's URC | Morning service |
| 4 | 7 Oct 2023 | St Mary's Church, Bramall Lane | *Reasons to Sing!* concert |
| 5 | 5 Nov 2023 | Doncaster Minster | Eucharist |
| 6 | 5 Nov 2023 | Doncaster Minster | Fauré Requiem |

The double-page spread overleaf
may be detached for display.

STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

**27 children and 10 adult singers…**






**sang 24 services and 18 other performances…**



# 2023-24




**for 18 churches and 12 other hosts…**





**reaching 4,300 people.**

**Charity Number: 1195909**

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 12 Nov 2023 | St John's Church, Owlerton | Evensong for Remembrance |
| 8 | 19 Nov 2023 | St Mark's Church, Broomhill | Come & Sing Evensong |
| 9 | 1 Dec 2023 | St John's Church, Owlerton | Children’s Hospital Snowflake Fair |
| 10 | 2 Dec 2023 | Woodseats Allotments | Carol singing for Children’s Hospital |
| 11 | 3 Dec 2023 | St Mary's Church, Ecclesfield | Advent Carol Service |
| 12 | 8 Dec 2023 | St Andrew's URC | Sheffield Carols Singalong |
| 13 | 9 Dec 2023 | Rawson Spring Pub | Charity carol singing |
| 14 | 13 Dec 2023 | IKEA Sheffield | Carol singing for Roundabout |
| 15 | 16 Dec 2023 | St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield | Family Christmas concert with SYO |
| 16 | 17 Dec 2023 | St John's Church, Owlerton | Christmas Carol Service |
| 17 | 17 Dec 2023 | Private Christmas Party | Carol singing |
| 18 | 21 Dec 2023 | All Saints Church, Ecclesall | Oratorio Chorus Christmas concert |
| 19 | 12 Jan 2024 | St John's Church, Owlerton | Friends’ New Year Event |
| 20 | 21 Jan 2024 | St Aidan's Church, Manor Lane | Epiphany Carol Service |
| 21 | 28 Jan 2024 | Sheffield Cathedral | Joint Evensong |
| 22 | 2 Feb 2024 | St Matthew's Church, Carver Street | Candlemas |
| 23 | 3 Feb 2024 | St Matthew's Church, Carver Street | Wedding |
| 24 | 18 Feb 2024 | St Mary's Church, Ross-on-Wye | Eucharist |
| 25 | 24 Feb 2024 | Whirlow Spirituality Centre | Lament |
| 26 | 2 Mar 2024 | St Mark's Church, Broomhill | Masterclass with Neil Taylor |
| 27 | 17 Mar 2024 | St John's Church, Ranmoor | Bach St Matthew Passion |
| 28 | 29 Mar 2024 | St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield | Good Friday Service |
| 29 | 28 Mar 2024 | St Mark's Church, Broomhill | Quartet for Maundy Thursday |
| 30 | 28 Apr 2024 | St John the Baptist, Hooton Roberts | Evensong |
| 31 | 30 Apr 2024 | St Michael & All Angels, Wombwell | Diocesan Safeguarding service |
| 32 | 12 May 2024 | St Edmund's Castleton | Benefice service |
| 33 | 19 May 2024 | Beauchief Abbey | Evensong |
| 34 | 2 Jun 2024 | St George's Stockport | Eucharist |
| 35 | 2 Jun 2024 | St George's Stockport | Evensong |
| 36 | 11 Jun 2024 | The Crucible | A Night at the Musicals |
| 37 | 22 Jun 2024 | Bishop's Croft | Bishop’s Garden Party |
| 38 | 22 Jun 2024 | Norwood Allotments | Summer Solstice |
| 39 | 24 Jun 2024 | St John's Church, Mexborough | Patronal Service |
| 40 | 30 Jun 2024 | Sheffield Cathedral | Joint Evensong |
| 41 | 6 Jul 2024 | High Green School | Summer Music Festival |
| 42 | 7 Jul 2024 | Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses | End of term Evensong |

We estimate that we reached around 4,300 people through these 42 performances in 2023-24. Given our ambition to introduce more people to the English choral tradition, we were pleased that the number of people attending our services of Choral Evensong averaged nearly 50. In total, we estimate that around 2,160 people have attended services that we have sung this year.

### *Singing workshops*

Having previously focused on widening our reach, we focused our work in schools in 2023-24 on a smaller number of more significant relationships in order to deliver greater value and impact for schools, and build a stronger relationship through which to attract potential Choristers. We worked with 8 schools delivering around 37 hours of free provision to around 1,400 children.

### *Promoting Choral Music*

We continued to pursue creative and innovative ways of promoting the English choral tradition and sharing our music with new and diverse groups of people who wouldn't necessarily seek it out or otherwise experience it. We added a page to our website on how our choral music can contribute to weddings, alongside our existing page explaining and promoting the service of Choral Evensong, as well as pages promoting the power of choral music at other community events.

In October 2023, we concluded our *Reason to Sing!* project with social supermarket users at St Mary's Bramall Lane Community Centre. The project celebrated the role that music plays in people's lives while introducing them to the joys of the English choral tradition. We listened to the stories behind people's favourite songs and chose six of them to be arranged to be sung in harmony by the choir. We ran a series of community singing workshops to teach local people to sing the tunes of each of these six songs. We then matched each of the chosen songs with a piece from our sacred choral repertoire that expresses similar emotions. The project concluded with Steel City Choristers and the local singers performing a community concert together featuring each of the matched pairs of songs, with videos of people from the community and the choir telling the stories behind them.

Kate Josephs CB, Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council who attended the concert said:

> *"The Reasons to Sing! concert was a joyful celebration; highlighting the power of music to bring people together. What a brilliant example of the positive work that Steel City Choristers do in our city. Thank you!"*

### *Our Collaborations*

In addition to the partnership we developed with St Mary's Bramall Lane for our *Reasons to Sing!* project, we developed and/or maintained four other significant collaborative partnerships over the course of the year:

- We worked with the choir of **St John's Church, Ranmoo**r to perform a devotional performance of the Bach *St Matthew Passion*. This was a major undertaking, and our Choristers in particular rose to the challenge. Even our Juniors participated, singing the part of the Ripieno Chorus. The performance was fully orchestrated and all the soloists, other than the Evangelist, were drawn from the two choirs. The devotional performance was

attended by around 250 people and it was both trailed and mentioned afterwards live on Classic FM.

- We were invited by the **Sheffield Oratorio Chorus** to be the guest choir at their annual Christmas concert attended by around 225 people. We sang two sets of three pieces as well as six carols together with the Oratorio Chorus and audience.
- We worked in partnership with the **Sheffield Youth Orchestra (SYO)** to deliver a joint family Christmas concert. The choir and orchestra each performed their own pieces as well as collaborating to perform Rutter's *Shepherd's Pipe Carol* together.
- We maintained our close ties with the **Parson Cross Initiative** (PXI) social inclusion charity, running workshops with members of their community and inviting them to join us in a performance at their Summer Solstice Event on their community allotment.

***Communications***

We maintained communications with our Friends and other supporters through seven editions of our email newsletter, with the number of subscribers increasing from 209 to 294 over the course of the year. We also maintained an active presence on social media, particularly Facebook, engaging at least weekly with over almost 1,000 followers as well as members of national groups such as the Choral Evensong Appreciation Society and Friends of Cathedral Music.

We were pleased with the press and media coverage we received during the year, including:

- a double page spread and online coverage in the Sheffield Star about our *Reasons to Sing!* community concert at St Mary's Church, Bramall Lane in October 2023;
- several mentions on Classic FM of our devotional performance of the Bach *St Matthew Passion* with the choir of St John's Church, Ranmoor in March 2024; and
- a double page spread and online coverage in the Sheffield Star, together with social media posts by Classic FM about our 100th performance at the Crucible Theatre in June 2024.

We await the publication of *Lighten our Darkness,* a documentary about the service of Evensong, in which we will feature alongside the choirs of Winchester Cathedral, Truro Cathedral and St John's College, Cambridge. The Producer is keen to showcase our community-based approach to sustaining and sharing high-quality choral music, particularly the way we are offering services of Choral Evensong to local parish churches.

We are grateful to the producer of *Lighten our Darkness* for using the footage he filmed to produce, pro bono, a short standalone promotional trailer about Steel City Choristers which is available to watch on the homepage of our website and on our YouTube channel. We think you'll like it!

***Our Volunteers***

We benefited hugely from a wide range of people giving their time freely as volunteers to support the choir over the course of the year - thank you if you were one of them! This included our:

- **Chaperones**: In line with our safeguarding procedure, all choir rehearsals and events in which our Choristers take part are supervised by at least one trained chaperone in addition to the session leaders. 12 people supported the choir as volunteer chaperones during the course of the year, 9 of whom were parents of Choristers.

- **Clerks**: While many adult members of the choir have in the past earned a salary or held a financial scholarship for the high quality of their singing, all of our Clerks sing with Steel City Choristers as volunteers without payment. This year we had 10 regular Clerks and a number of semi-regular or occasional other singers.
- **Music theory volunteers**: 6 regular volunteers, plus occasional extras, supported the planning and delivery of regular group music theory sessions for our Choristers.
- **Other pro bono services:** 5 people provided significant regular pro bono support accompanying rehearsals, fundraising, web hosting and technical support, gig fixing and working with our boys with changing voices.
- **Advisors & Patrons**: a range of experienced and accomplished musicians and leaders provide pro bono advice and support to the Chair and Trustees.
- **Trustees**: Our Trustees share a passion for seeing choral music more widely sung and appreciated. They brought a diverse range of relevant skills and experience to the leadership of the organisation. All of them volunteered their time to lead and govern the charity and many of them went above and beyond to volunteer their time and skills to support the operational management and administration of the choir.

***Overall Reflections on the Success of our Model***

As we continue to pioneer a new model for sustaining and diversifying access to the all-age English choral tradition, we have only remained viable over the last year because we have been able to balance a number of key factors. These include: sufficient people to sing, sufficient people to sing for, and sufficient money to cover our costs.

We have recruited singers because:

- our intensive musical education is free and first class, and offers the opportunity to sing a board repertoire at a high standard in a wide range of churches and other venues;
- our culture, including our youth work, puts people at the centre of what we do and means they have fun, build friendships and feel valued; and
- we are independent and don't sing every Sunday morning, which means we are more accessible to those who want to sing but who don't want to leave their current church in order to join a choir, as well as to those who don't want to join a church at all.

We have had plenty of people to sing for because:

- churches and other communities invite us to sing for them, which means that we are not responsible for attracting a congregation or raising an audience; and
- we always tailor our offer to meet the needs of the churches and communities we sing for, so they feel grateful and well served.

We don't charge fees to our singers or hosts, but have raised money because:

- Choristers' parents value our free musical education, and although under no obligation to give to the charity, many do give generously;
- the organisations for whom we sing usually make a donation to thank us for our singing;
- individual supporters give generously to support our charitable aims; and
- grant funders recognise the educational and/or artistic value of our work.

Another critical factor in the ongoing viability of the choir over the last year has been sufficient capacity to lead the organisation and administer its programme of activities. We have, however, remained highly dependent on a small number of committed volunteers who go above and beyond to give much more than could be reasonably asked of their spare time to run the choir. This includes, but is not limited to our committed group of Trustees who give their time freely to go beyond their role in governing the organisation to lead or support with:

- building partnerships with organisations across Sheffield and beyond;
- booking our diverse schedule of performances with a wide range of different hosts;
- managing relationships with chorister parents, including twice-termly meetings;
- scheduling and organising our programme of youth work, including visiting speakers;
- leading our communications via our website, social media, newsletters and press notices;
- purchasing and printing sheet music, and compiling orders of service and concert programmes;
- managing our music library and the provision of sheet music to the choir;
- administering our Friends scheme; and
- applying for grant funding and reporting to our funders.

As founding Trustees, we are aware that we do not have the capacity to sustain our huge efforts indefinitely, but that we can not expect the volunteers who come after us to be as passionate or able to be as generous with their time. In order to secure the long term viability of the choir, a more sustainable model will need to be developed through which the workload is either shared by a larger group of volunteers or sufficient funds are raised to pay staff to lead and manage the choir under the oversight of the Trustees.

***Success of our Fundraising Activities***

Regular giving from Friends of the choir remains a significant source of income, not only for the way it provides a predictable source of future income, but also due to the goodwill of which it is a reflection. It has proved hard, however, to recruit new Friends over the last year - we welcomed five new Friends that pledged regular monthly donations and three that made a one-off donation. In total, over the course of the year we had 33 people giving monthly, two giving annually, and six giving a one-off donation. In addition, we were grateful to also raise a significant proportion of our income via major donations over the course of the year, and are considering how we might build more connections through which to benefit from similarly generous philanthropy.

We have continued to find it challenging to balance our commitment to avoiding making money a barrier, with the importance of articulating our financial position and needs to our hosts. Over the course of the year, 15 churches gave financially via the collection plate or a donation in gratitude for us singing for them - with an average gift of around £140. We developed a new source of income this year by singing for a wedding, and taking bookings for three more.

In 2022-23 we developed materials and a page on our website for potential business sponsors. We have appreciated ongoing financial support from the Gripple Foundation this year, but have not otherwise had any success engaging the business community to support our work.

We continued to work hard to secure grant funding to underpin our finances while we build support from our Friends, hosts and sponsors. All of our fundraising was led by one of our Trustees on a voluntary basis. Over the course of the year we received grant funding from 14 local and national Trusts and Foundation. We are very appreciative of the support the Trustees of these organisations have been able to provide and, in particular, grateful to our four new funders during the course of the year: The Sheffield Bluecoat and Mount Pleasant Educational Foundation, The Finzi Trust, The Hollowford Trust and The Marsh Charitable Trust.

We developed a new range of community fundraising activities during the year, mobilising members of the choir community through various efforts to raise funds particularly for our planned tours to Winchester in October 2024 and Berlin in August 2025. Choristers took home a tube of smarties at Easter and brought it back filled with the fruit of their fundraising labours. We also launched a *100 Days of Music Making* project alongside our 100th performance in which members of the choir community raised sponsorship to make music on one hundred days before the end of the year.

The total income we secured exceeded our in-year expenditure, meaning that we were able to not only fully fund the activity we set out to deliver in 2023-24, but also to grow our reserves and end the year with a healthy surplus to carry forward towards future costs. We are encouraged by the success of our various fundraising activities and grateful that we end 2023-24 in a relatively strong financial position.

The Trustees are, however, aware of the significant ongoing challenge to secure sufficient funds to operate the choir on a truly sustainable basis, given:

- the domestic and international tours being planned that will lead to a significant increase in the annual budget in 2024-25; and
- the significant value of the support that Trustees and other volunteers provided pro bono to the choir in 2023-24, which is not taken for granted but nevertheless masks the true cost of running the choir, and which may one day need to be built into the budget in full or part, and delivered by staff paid to run the organisation.

## 3. Financial Review of 2023-24

A modest increase in expenditure in 2023-24 compared to the previous year was offset by stronger growth in income.

### *Expenditure*

Total expenditure in 2023-24 was up from £34,266 to £41,938. Of this £37,430 related to in-year operational costs (the balance being costs incurred for activities that will take place in 2024-25, namely deposits for our tour to Berlin, and funds received that were then spent or given to charity on behalf of others). This was an increase of around £5,000 on equivalent costs in 2022-23. Drivers of increasing costs in 2023-24 included rising fees in line with recommended Musician Union rates, additional singing tuition, and the costs of delivering two significant events: our *Reasons to Sing!* community concert and our devotional performance of the Bach *St Matthew Passion*.

Our overheads remain low. 62% of in-year operational expenditure was on fees to the musicians who plan and deliver our musical education, and a further 23% on costs directly associated with our musical activities. Non-musical overheads were therefore only 15% of total expenditure, comprising the costs of things such as training, choir social events, communications, publicity, and insurance. There was no expenditure on fees or salaries for any management, administrative, marketing or fundraising activities, other than £200 paid for professional support with the press notice about our 100th performance.

### *Income*

We secured income from a diverse range of sources in 2023-24.

While our grant income was down from over £38,000 last year to just under £27,000 in 2023-24, income from major donations increased to £15,000 from £5,000, and donations from Friends and other supporters increased by around £2,000 to just short of £9,500. Income that resulted directly from our singing, including gifts from host organisations and church plate collections, increased from under £3,000 in 2022-23 to nearly £4,000 this year, in part due to us being asked to sing our first wedding service.

Our operational income (total income less the funds received to give or spend on behalf of others), totalled £63,369. This was made up as follows:

- 42% - Grants
- 24% - Major donations
- 15% - Friends and other donations
- 6% - Performance income
- 5% - Community fundraising
- 4% - Gift Aid
- 4% - Contributions to tours

Total income in 2023-24 was £64,964, comprising:

**Restricted grants for our tour to Winchester Cathedral in October 2024 - £2,260:**

- Hollowford Trust - £1,260
- Worrall Male Voice Choir Musical Grants Foundation - £1,000

**Unrestricted grants - £24,447:**

- Sheffield Bluecoat and Mount Pleasant Foundation - £2,000
- Ecclesfield Welfare and Educational Charities - £1,000
- Finzi Trust - £2,500
- Golsoncott Foundation - £500
- Gripple Foundation - £500
- Liz and Terry Bramall Trust - £5,000
- Marsh Charitable Trust - £500
- Mildenhall Charitable Trust - £947
- Sheffield Burgesses Education Foundation - £2,500
- Sheffield Grammar School Education Foundation - £3,000
- Sheffield's Worshipful Company of Cutlers - £1,000
- Williams Church Music Trust - £5,000

**Donations - £24,490:**

- Major donations - £15,000
- Giving from other Friends of the choir - £9,275
- Other donations from individuals or organisations - £215

**Community fundraising - £3,028**

- 100 Days of Music Making - £476
- Bake sale - £51
- Bishop's Garden party - £110
- Easy Fundraising - £26
- High Green Primary School fete - £118
- Smarties tube collection - £557
- Winchester tour donations - £1,520
- Yard sale - £170

**Other income - £10,739:**

- Gifts and donations from those for whom we sang - £3,841
- Contributions towards tours - £2,551
- Gift aid on 2021-22 giving - £2,752
- Contributions for other goods/services - £1,573
- Giving to pass on to other charities - £22

***End-Year Position***

At the end of the year, a net in-year surplus of £23,026 led to the total assets held by the charity increasing to £59,744, of which £3,908 was restricted funding for our tour to Wincester in October 2024. The charity does not hold any investments.

In light of Trustees' Reserves Policy to maintain a reserve equivalent to approximately six months' operational costs, and the projected growth in these costs in future years, an additional £3,000 was added to reserves, bringing the total held to £20,000. The cash carried forward to support next year's budget was therefore £39,744, up from £15,810 the previous year.

The Trustees do not have any uncertainty about the charity continuing as a going concern.

# 4. Structure, Governance and Management of the charity in 2023-24

### *Constitution*

Steel City Choristers is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Foundation) and governed by a board of Trustees. There are no external persons or bodies entitled to appoint Trustees to the board. All appointments to the board are made by the Trustees on the basis of people's relevant skills and experience.

### *Trustees*

The Trustees managing the charity in 2023-24 were:

- **Kate Caroe** (Chair) – Home educator, and founding co-director of OutoftheBox Training & Consultancy, a not-for-profit organisation supporting personal and community wellbeing through the power of story and play. Kate is paid to teach our Juniors. She sings alto in the choir and is also a choir parent.
- **Jeremy Dawson** (Treasurer) – Professor of Health Management at the University of Sheffield, Chair of a local orchestra (Hallam Sinfonia), and former Lay Clerk at Sheffield Cathedral. Jeremy leads our work with boys with changing voices on a voluntary basis, and sings tenor in the choir.
- **Chris Caroe** (Secretary) – a civil servant at the Department for Education. Chris leads fundraising on a voluntary basis. He sings tenor in the choir and is also a choir parent.
- **Yinka Fadahunsi-Oluwole** (Trustee until August 2024) – a doctor and staff governor at the Sheffield Children's Hospital and Non-Executive Director at Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust.
- **Angela Holman** – a teacher and choir parent. Angela is our Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- **Gill O'Connell** – a teacher and choir parent.

The Trustees, and in particular the Chair, are advised by the charity's Patrons and Advisors – details of whom are available on the page about Our team on our website.

There are no corporate Trustees.

No Trustees hold title to property belonging to the charity.

There are no funds held as custodian Trustees on behalf of others.

There are no exemptions from disclosure.

### *Roles and responsibilities*

The charity does not have any employees, but rather engages music professionals on a freelance basis, paying fees for the services they render.

The board of Trustees delegates specific responsibilities to three committees each tasked with leadership in relation to a number of strategic aims:

1. Operations Committee
    - **To Sing:** Provide regular opportunities for choir members to rehearse, receive specialist musical tuition and perform.
    - **To Grow**: Recruit new children and adults to sing with us to both grow and diversify our membership and retain those we have.
    - **To Safeguard**: Ensure we operate in a safe and lawful manner at all times.
2. Partnerships, Projects and Communications Committee
    - **To Reach Out:** Establish relationships with new partners and host communities to diversify those hearing and appreciating our singing.
    - **To Innovate:** Design and deliver ways to engage children in choral music and present it to audiences who wouldn't otherwise have access to it.
    - **To Promote**: Raise public awareness and interest in Steel City Choristers.
3. Finance and Governance Committee
    - **To Thrive:** Ensure the sustainability and financial viability of the organisation.
    - **To Comply:** Ensure the propriety and efficiency of our organisational governance and reporting.

***Statement on public benefit***

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. This means that we have:

- made decisions to ensure our charity's purpose provides benefit;
- managed risks of detriment or harm to our charity's beneficiaries;
- made decisions about who benefits in ways that are consistent with our purpose; and
- made decisions to make sure any personal benefits are no more than incidental.

We have exercised our discretion:

- in accordance with our charity's purpose, and not outside of it;
- for the public benefit and with regard to the commission's public benefit guidance where relevant; and
- in accordance with the general framework for Trustee decision making.

***Risks***

The principal risks facing the charity and how these are mitigated are as follows:

**Volunteer risk: that we do not continue to benefit from the very high level of pro bono support we rely on to plan, delivery and administer the choir's activity**
Mitigation: We put relationships first and make efforts to protect the wellbeing of all those who contribute their time and skills voluntarily to enable the successful operation of the choir. We continue to try to identify tasks that can be delegated and shared between a wider group of people to reduce our heavy reliance on a few individuals, and also to weigh up the feasibility of incorporating additional activities within our budget to be undertaken on a paid basis.

**Recruitment risk: that we are unable to sustain the number of children and adults singers that we need to operate a viable choir.**
Mitigation: We recruit children to sing in the choir without prejudice to their background or prior experience and do not charge fees, so that money is never a barrier to singing with us. We maximise word of mouth and social media opportunities to encourage children to audition to join us, especially in September at the beginning of the school year. Throughout the year, we tell children about the choir as we deliver singing workshops in schools and community settings and hold a *Be a Chorister at Christmas* event to create an opportunity for children to experience singing with us. Our focus on building relationships through our youth work and choir socials supports retention of existing Choristers. We encourage boys whose voices change to continue singing with us, including through specialist music training during rehearsal time. We recruit experienced adult singers for the lower parts mainly via word of mouth.

**Funding risk: that we are unable to secure the funding we need to sustain our planned activities.**
Mitigation: We have developed a diverse funding model based on a number of different sources of income. Our aim is to reduce our dependence on grant funding over time as we build a broader base of local supporters who see us as an asset for the city and give regularly to support us. We set an annual budget at the start of the year having regard to funds currently available and likely future income. Financial controls ensure all expenditure remains within budget. We maintain a financial reserve equivalent to approximately six months' core operating costs, in line with our Reserves Policy published on the Policies page of our website. This creates resilience to continue core operations, while addressing any significant shortfall in funding that may arise.

**Safeguarding risk: that a safeguarding incident occurs despite the policies and procedures in place to keep everyone safe.**
Mitigation: We have members of our trained team of chaperones present at every rehearsal and event involving our children, and appropriate checks and training for all adults who are involved with the choir. Our robust safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed at least annually in line with Charity Commission guidance.

**Retention risk: that our Director of Music resigns and that we are faced with the cost, disruption and uncertainty of recruiting a replacement.**
Mitigation: The Trustees have developed a positive and collaborative relationship with the Director of Music and are confident that she shares their strong sense of ownership and pride in relation to the operation and future plans for the choir. The Trustees are committed to offering the Director of Music exciting and vibrant opportunities for creative musical expression and to supporting her ongoing professional development, backed where appropriate with appropriate funding. The Director of Music has agreed to provide us with three months' notice of any intention or plan to step down from her role.

STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

# 5. Statement of Financial Activities 2023-24

These accounts cover the period from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.

***Income and Expenditure***

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total funds | Last year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| **Income** | | | | |
| Donations | 24,490 | - | **24,490** | 12,733 |
| Performance income | 3,841 | - | **3,841** | 2,931 |
| Grants | 24,447 | 2,260 | **26,707** | 38,295 |
| Community fundraising | 3,028 | - | **3,028** | - |
| Contributions towards tours | - | 2,551 | **2,551** | 1,390 |
| Contributions for goods/services | 1,573 | | **1,573** | 627 |
| Contributions for charitable donations | - | 22 | **22** | 765 |
| Gift aid on previous year's donations | 2,752 | - | **-** | 735 |
| **Total income** | **60,131** | **4,833** | **64,964** | **57,476** |
| | | | | |
| **Expenditure** | | | | |
| Director of Music fees | 15,145 | 630 | **15,775** | 14,234 |
| Other musician fees | 5,924 | 1,611 | **7,535** | 5,892 |
| Training | 505 | - | **505** | 559 |
| Recordings | - | - | **-** | 900 |
| Music purchase | 1,456 | - | **1,456** | 1,354 |
| Travel | 112 | - | **112** | 145 |
| Venue hire | 2,050 | 1,000 | **3,050** | 3,028 |
| Insurance/subscriptions | 751 | - | **751** | 577 |
| Independent inspection of accounts | 250 | - | **250** | 250 |
| DBS checks | 150 | - | **150** | 50 |
| Communications | 1,219 | 138 | **1,357** | 1,074 |
| Clothing | - | 473 | **473** | - |
| Social events, food & drink, gifts | 1,781 | 211 | **1,992** | 1,163 |
| Trips & tours | 5,535 | - | **5,535** | 3,039 |
| Other specific project delivery costs | 1,579 | - | **1,579** | 299 |
| Miscellaneous | 488 | 25 | **513** | 419 |
| Payments for specific goods/services | 643 | - | **643** | 518 |
| Charitable donations | 240 | 22 | **262** | 765 |
| **Total expenditure** | **37,828** | **4,110** | **41,938** | **34,266** |
| | | | | |
| Net Surplus | 22,302 | 723 | **23,026** | 23,210 |
| | | | | |
| Balance brought forward from last year | 32,810 | 3,908 | **36,718** | 13,508 |
| | | | | |
| **Total funds carried forward** | **55,112** | **4,631** | **59,744** | **36,718** |

### *Assets and Liabilities*

The only asset held by Steel City Choristers as at 31 August 2024 was cash (including reserves), as follows:

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total funds | Last year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Cash | 35,510 | 4,631 | 39,744 | 19,718 |
| Reserves | 20,000 | - | 20,000 | 17,000 |
| **Total** | **55,510** | **3,908** | **59,744** | **36,718** |

The £4,631 restricted funds held at the end of 2023-24 include £2,260 in grants and £2,551 in contributions from parents towards our tour to Winchester Cathedral in October 2024.

There were no liabilities and no debtors or creditors.

### *Payments to Trustees*

No payments were made to Trustees in 2023-24 for any work conducted as Trustees.

A total of £1,531 was paid to three Trustees for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred when these could not be reasonably paid directly from the Steel City Choristers' bank account.

A total of £1,418 was paid to one Trustee who undertook paid work for the charity, following all necessary procedures being followed in line with charity guidance.

## 6. Declarations

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Signature** |  |  |
| **Name** | Kate Caroe | Jeremy Dawson |
| **Position** | Chair | Treasurer |
| **Date** | 13 November 2024 | 13 November 2024 |


STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

# Independent examiner's report on the accounts

## Section A Independent Examiner's Report

| | |
|---|---|
| **Report to the trustees/directors/ members of** | Steel City Choristers |
| **On accounts for the year ended** | 31 August 2024 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Charity no.: | 1195909 | Company no.: | |

**Set out on pages**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 August 2024

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act").

I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination, I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that:

- Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- The accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:** Venusia Ltd Apt 316 Wimbledon Central 21-33 Worple Road London - SW19 4BJ www.venusia.co.uk

**Date:** 08 November 2024

**Name:** Gerald Gurriet

**Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):** Association of International Accountants

**Address:** Venusia Ltd

London, SW19 4BJ

Apt 316 Wimbledon Central, 21 – 33 Worple Road

**STEEL CITY CHORISTERS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1195909

# Accounts

STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

# Trustees' Annual Report

**For the period**

**1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023**

**Charity name: Steel City Choristers**

**Charity registration number: 1195909**

**Principal address: 2 The Grove, Totley, S17 4AS**

# Steel City Choristers

## Report of the Trustees for the year ending 31 August 2023

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report and independently examined accounts for our financial year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.

## Chair's Report

It really is thrilling to look back over what has been only our second year as an incorporated charity and reflect on all we have done and how so many people have come together to help make that possible.

Steel City Choristers has practically doubled in scale since our first year in terms of both the number of times we have sung in public and the size of our core operational budget. We started the year having served 18 different hosts, and by the end we had sung for a total of 34 different churches or other communities. We started the year with the choir having performed 23 times, and by the end we had delivered our 64th performance. We had the joy of singing not just in Sheffield Cathedral for the first time, but also in Bradford Cathedral and in Ripon Cathedral as we enjoyed our first residential weekend tour. We collaborated in a performance with the Sheffield Horn Quartet, spent a weekend rehearsing and performing with Hilary Davan Wetton, and for the first time sang services of Mattins, Candlemass, café-church and Good Friday meditations. We launched our second Reasons to Sing! project, and co-designed and twice delivered an innovative event of Lament - once as an official Covid memorial event for the city of Sheffield.

It is very satisfying and rewarding to see the strength of our relationships growing both within the choir community and across the city and beyond. There are so many people to thank.

First and foremost, our choristers are amazing! They commit so much time and work so hard, and they are sounding great. There are not many activities that children can get involved in that have them working so closely as a team with not just other children of different ages but with adults too. They are a credit to themselves and their families, and we're really proud of them all. I'd also like to recognise the support of our choristers' families - as a choir mum myself I know how much family life has to re-orientate around choristers' commitments. I'm really grateful for all their support and constructive feedback.

Our adult clerks are a bedrock for the choir. I'm grateful for their passion for choral music, their commitment to the next generation of singers, their enviable musicality and their good humour. Their involvement in Steel City Choristers transforms our choristers' experience, energising and inspiring their musicianship and normalising the pathway to excellence. We couldn't operate without them. And I am not unaware of how many have in the past been paid to sing elsewhere, yet choose to sing with us. They are great musicians and increasingly great friends too.

We owe much of our success to the leadership of our Director of Music Eleanor Jarvis. This has been her first year with us, and she has settled in quickly, establishing herself as a competent and well-liked conductor. I'm pleased that we were able to support her in these early days of her career with inspirational visits this year to meet and learn from members of the Music Department at both Truro and Winchester Cathedrals.

Our singing teacher, Vivien Pike, also remains an inspiration and support to many of our choristers, and we were delighted to celebrate her life-time of outstanding music teaching through a nomination for Classic FM's Music Teacher of the Year.

The trustees and I remain grateful to the Vicar and PCC of St John's Owlerton for continuing to provide a home for our otherwise itinerant choir, accommodating twice weekly rehearsals and a range of other events, including in January 2023 our first annual meeting of Friends and supporters to review our last year of activity, pub-quiz style.

Many other churches across the city have also offered the choir an enthusiastic and warm welcome this year, and I want to thank them for making our choristers and clerks feel so valued and appreciated. Singing for such a wide range of churches not only opens one's eyes to the variety of their churchmanship and the role that our music can play in their worship, but it also helps keep choristers' experience fresh and varied.

We have been pleased to develop relationships with other musical organisations across the city this year, in particular the Sheffield Music Hub who invited me to chair a new network of organisations from across the city interested in getting children singing. Together, we have the opportunity to be more joined up and strategic about how we coordinate each of our offers, and create clearer pathways for children to pursue their musical interests.

It has been exciting to have some publicity this year, not least via a feature article in the Spring 2023 edition of Classical Music Magazine, and the opportunity to be filmed as part of a documentary to be called "Lighten our Darkness" about the service of Choral Evensong, due to be released on DVD next year.

Friends of the choir are playing an increasingly significant role in funding our current and future activity. Their commitment to giving regularly to the charity provides a huge security net that underpins our future sustainability. My hope is that, over time, a bigger and bigger proportion of our costs will be covered by those locally who believe in our vision and value our service to the city, enabling us to reduce our dependence on hard-won grant funding.

We are also indebted to the growing number of Trusts and Foundations who have seen fit to provide us with funding this year as they recognise the impact we can have to further their charitable purposes - whether that is to promote church music, provide high quality education to children, or promote and diversify access to the arts.

One of the grants I have been most excited about is the Awards for All funding that is enabling us to deliver a second Reasons to Sing! project, this time with St Mary's Bramall Lane. The project is such a lovely opportunity to showcase the beauty of traditional choral music while bringing people together to celebrate the role that music plays in our lives. While the final concert will fall in our 2023-24 financial year, all the groundwork has happened this year, including understanding and filming the stories behind people's favourite songs; arranging those songs in four part harmony for the choir (thank you Tim Peters); and matching them to pieces from the choral repertoire. The process of learning the pieces has begun too. I'm thankful for our partnership with Yo Tozer Loft of YoYo Song Shop and for her connection to the community of users of the Social Supermarket at St Mary's that is making this project possible.

Finally, I'm grateful to the other trustees for their relentless commitment to the choir and to leading it in a way that offers the best possible experience for our choristers and clerks, and service to the churches and communities of Sheffield. Tony has now stood down after his two-year term came to end, having focused mainly on helping establish our work with schools. Jeremy has been a powerhouse of organisation with both the finances and the operation of the choir. Chris has ensured our governance runs smoothly while working flat out to raise all our funding. Angela has taken on roadie duties with our 'merch desk' at all our

events, ensured everyone has got fed on numerous occasions, and been an almost ever-present chaperone at rehearsals. Yinka remains our diversity and inclusion champion, and I was delighted to welcome Gill, a choir mum, to the board just before the end of the year.

While a charity can never take its existence for granted, it feels like Steel City Choristers has built and strengthened relationships this year that will underpin its role in the city for years to come.

**Kate Caroe**
Chair of Trustees

## Objectives and Activities

*Our purposes*

The purposes of the charity are:

1. For the public benefit, to advance education and training of children and young people, particularly those living in or educated in Sheffield and the surrounding area, in the subject of music and in particular choral music, primarily but not exclusively by
    a. creating opportunities for children, young people and adults to sing alongside each other to the highest musical standards; and
    b. promoting and delivering musical and choral education and training to children and young people, regardless of their socio-economic or ethnic background and irrespective of their prior experience.
2. To advance public education in and appreciation of music and in particular choral music and related activities in all their aspects particularly in Sheffield and the surrounding area, primarily but not exclusively by presenting public performances and producing digital content, particularly for communities that would not otherwise have access to choral music.

*Our activities*

Steel City Choristers is a choir of children and adults rooted in the cathedral choral tradition, conducted by Director of Music, Eleanor Jarvis. We serve a diverse range of churches and other communities in and around Sheffield with a focus on those who would not otherwise have access to choral music. We also deliver high quality curriculum-linked singing workshops in schools and communities.

Children and young people aged between 6 and 18 who join Steel City Choristers are trained to sing to the highest musical standards alongside experienced adult singers. Singing with us is subject to an audition, but we do not require any prior musical experience. We aim to put relationships first and to be an inclusive and welcoming community. We do not charge fees to children or adults who sing with us, though parents are encouraged to give to the work of the charity if they are in a position to do so. We also welcome children and adult singers of all faiths and none. We help our choristers to understand the music they sing and the contexts and venues in which they sing it, including through the youth work that we integrate into our rehearsals that also helps to build relationships among the choristers.

During term time, our choristers rehearse for three and a half hours a week split across two evenings, with separate provision for our junior choristers to help them develop a firm foundation of musical skills. Our teenage boys with changing voices rehearse for two hours a week during term time, and the Clerks (adult singers) rehearse for 90 minutes each week.

Choristers who have sung with the choir for at least a term and who are aged nine or over are also eligible to receive 20 minutes of one-to-one singing lessons with our teacher, Mrs Vivien Pike, every two weeks in term time.

While we are rooted in the cathedral music tradition, we do not belong to a single church. We are an independent choir that serves a wide range of churches and other communities across Sheffield, spanning the sacred and secular divide by serving all those who recognise the artistic and spiritual value of the music we sing. However, in line with our focus on church choral repertoire, the majority of the choir's engagements are to lead worship in churches. We believe music can be a powerful vehicle for worship, and can create a space for personal contemplation and being present in the moment. Our aim is to:

- Enable choral music for churches within the tradition that have no choir of their own;
- Promote choral music to churches from other musical traditions; and
- Enhance choral music for churches that need our support to sing more ambitious repertoire.

Unlike many choirs that aim to attract people to their own events, we focus on taking our choral music out into the communities where people already gather and shape our offer around their needs. We focus on sharing high quality choral music with those who would not otherwise access it, prioritising communities with less cultural capital, because we believe in its power to change lives and want more people to benefit from its beauty and the joy it brings. In addition to singing church services, we design creative and innovative ways of engaging with communities and sharing our music with them.

Our singing workshops in schools and community settings aim to inspire primary age children to sing and join choirs. They can be linked to the Key Stage 2 Model Music Curriculum or otherwise tailored to schools' needs. Our music education resources are designed for non-music specialists to enable them to follow up on our sessions and continue to help children develop key musical skills. We signpost children to local singing opportunities - including through information about Steel City Choristers and how to arrange an informal audition to join us.

Further information about our activities is available on our website, including:

- about the choir, its origin and unique ways of working
- our calendar of opportunities to hear us sing
- how to join our choir
- special items of news and previous editions of our newsletters
- our offer to churches, including the service of Evensong
- our work in schools and our free music education resources
- our innovative Lament and Reasons to Sing! projects
- how we can support community, business and other events
- our offer to potential sponsors.

*Statement on public benefit*

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. This means that we have:

- made decisions to ensure our charity's purpose provides benefit
- managed risks of detriment or harm to our charity's beneficiaries
- made decisions about who benefits in ways that are consistent with our purpose
- made decisions to make sure any personal benefits are no more than incidental.

We have exercised our discretion:

- in accordance with our charity's purpose, and not outside of it
- for the public benefit
- with regard to the commission's public benefit guidance where relevant
- in accordance with the general framework for Trustee decision making.

*The role of volunteers*

Volunteers have played a critical role in the operation and governance of the charity this year, including our:

- **Chaperones**: In line with our safeguarding procedure all choir rehearsals and events in which our choristers are taking part are supervised by at least one chaperone. Eight people supported the choir as chaperones during the course of the year, six of whom are parents of choristers.
- **Clerks**: While many adult members of the choir have in the past commanded a salary or financial scholarship for the high quality of their singing, all of them sing with Steel City Choristers as volunteers without payment.
- **Advisors & Patrons**: The advice and support of a range of experienced and accomplished musicians and leaders has been invaluable to the Trustees as they steered the charity through its first year.
- **Trustees**: All Trustees share a passion for seeing choral music more widely sung and appreciated across the city. They bring a diverse range of relevant skills and experience to the leadership of the organisation. All of them volunteer their time to lead and govern the charity.

## Achievements and Performance

*Overview*

Steel City Choristers has thrived over the year from September 2022 to August 2023. We have developed our maturity and resilience as an organisation, as well as our reputation and profile as an innovative and high-quality choir. The range of opportunities opening up for us has continued to grow, including the diversity of both the churches and other communities we have sung for and the repertoire we have sung, as well as the range of schools and communities for whom we have delivered singing workshops.

*Chorister recruitment*

We were encouraged by the number of children auditioning for and joining the choir this year, attracted by word of mouth and events such as our *Be a Chorister at Christmas* event that gave children the opportunity to experience performing with the choir at a carol concert in December 2022 attended by the Lord Mayor. Recent feedback from choristers and their parents has highlighted the value of the youth work and social events we integrate into our work with our choristers and how this is helping to create a child-centred organisation in which they feel known and valued.

Over the year, we recruited 10 new choristers, seven of whom decided to stay with the choir - two are full choristers and the other five are juniors who are making good progress, and two new regular adult clerks, three new occasional clerks and a number of new deps. Offset by other choristers that have left us, by the end of the year, overall numbers have slightly increased to 14 full choristers, 5 juniors, 3 changing voices and 9 regular clerks.

Our choristers' diversity has increased. They live in seven postcode areas of Sheffield and:

- 30% are an ethnicity other than White
- 57% are female
- 30% speak a language other than English at home
- 13% identify as having a special need (e.g. learning, medical or physical).

Parents of new choristers have said: *“This is a fantastic choir - they are so supportive and make rehearsals really fun” and “My child loves it - she really enjoys coming to choir”.*

*Music education for choristers*

We delivered around 200 hours of musical education to our choristers over the course of the year. Over 36 weeks of term time, this included 3.5 hours of professional choral training every week and fortnightly 1:1 singing lessons, as well as a diverse range of 41 performances. As well as musical skills and the benefits of singing for mental and physical well-being, our choristers are developing confidence, emotional resilience, teamwork, commitment and concentration skills that will prepare them well for life.

In recognition of how it can be a big step for new children to join the choir, over the last year we have further developed our musical provision for junior choristers as part of our regular weekly rehearsals to help them develop a strong foundation of core musical skills, and good relationships: both of which are key to them finding their feet and sticking with the choir. Having this provision in place has meant that we have been able to recruit more young singers than we would have previously been able to support in the main choir.

We have also supported our teenage boys to keep singing. Many choirs don’t offer boys the opportunity to continue singing once their voices change. But this is important to us as we seek to put relationships first and be an inclusive and welcoming community.

Particular highlights of the choristers’ musical education this year were the opportunity to:

- work with and learn from Hilary Davan Wetton during a weekend of rehearsals and an informal concert;
- sing the morning and evening services at Bradford Cathedral;; and
- go on our first residential weekend tour to sing services at Ripon Cathedral.

*Youthwork*

Sophie Boughton, the youth worker at St John’s, led youth work as part of our Monday rehearsals each week. This included a variety of activities, such as

- talking about different church traditions e.g. a cathedral, or an Anglo-Catholic church;
- talking about our highs and lows of recent services or concerts we had sung, or of our week or recent holiday;
- playing games such as Ninja or Grandmother’s Footsteps;
- telling an OutoftheBox story about Advent or Easter; and
- telling an OutoftheBox story of the Magnificat and then listening critically to a setting of the canticles, and the story of the destruction of Jerusalem and then listening to the Tallis Lamentations.

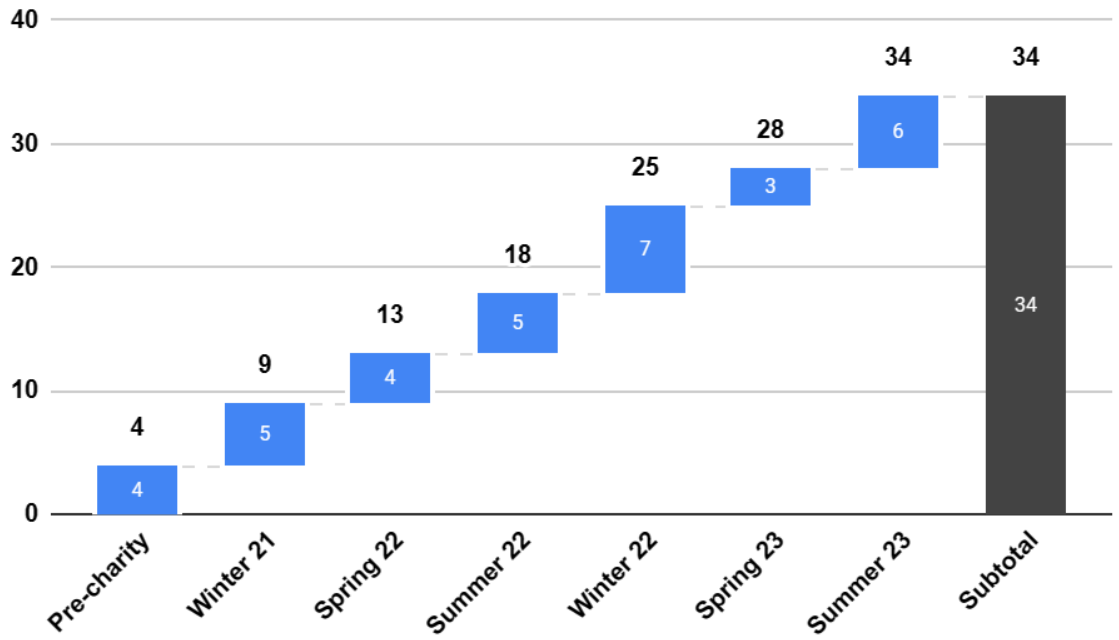
*Hosts*

We sang for a total of 26 different hosts in 2022-23, 16 of which were hosts that we sang for the first time, including three cathedrals for whom we were delighted to be invited to sing:

- Sheffield – where we sang Evensong in May;
- Bradford – where we sang services on a Sunday in June; and
- Ripon – where we enjoyed our first residential: singing a weekend of services in July.

By the end of the year, this brought the total number of host communities that the choir has sung for to date to 34.

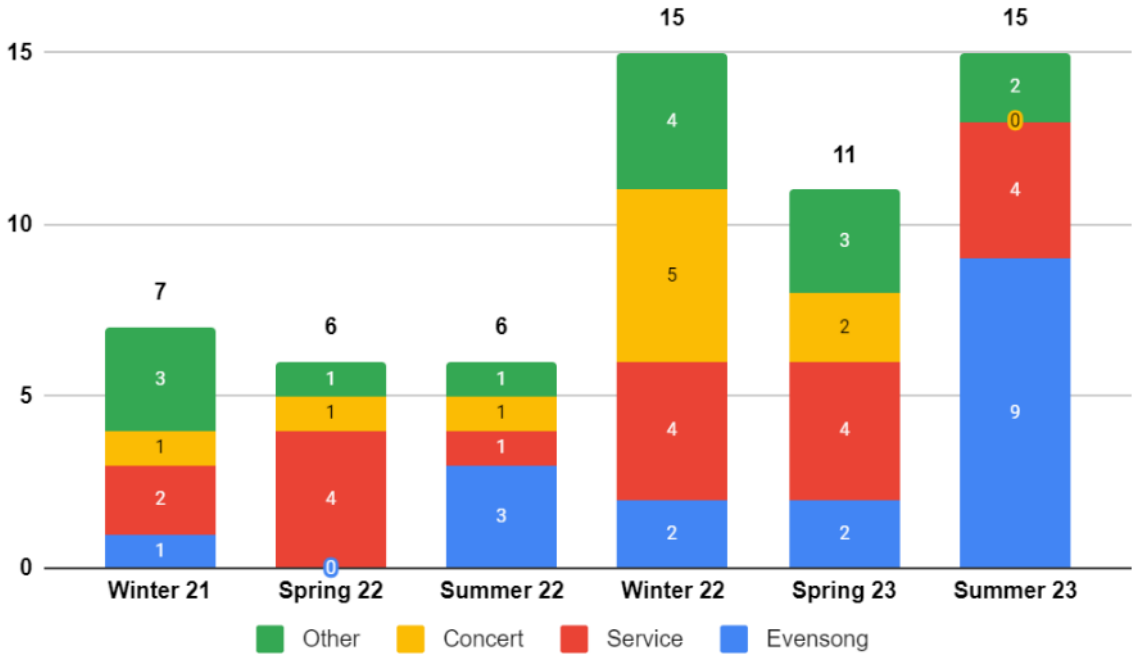
**New Host Communities for whom we have sung, by term**




*Performances*

Over the year we sang in public a total of 41 times - 25 church services (for 15 different hosts) and 16 other concerts or events (for 13 different hosts). This was a significant increase on the 19 engagements (11 services and 8 other events) we sang in 2021-22.

**Singing Engagements, by term and type**



We estimate that we reached a total of over 3,200 people with our music in 2022-23. Given our ambition to introduce more people to the choral tradition, we were particularly pleased with the number of people in the congregation for the choral services we have sung. For example, the average attendance for the services of Evensong that we sang at local parish churches was 44, with a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 70. 130 attended our Evensong at Sheffield Cathedral. In total, we estimate that around 2,100 people have attended services that we have sung this year.

Our 41 singing engagements were as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 18 Sep 2022 | Beauchief Abbey | Evensong (Clerks only) |
| 2 | 25 Sep 2022 | St John's Church, Knaresborough | Evensong |
| 3 | 16 Oct 2022 | Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses | Mattins |
| 4 | 10 Nov 2022 | St Andrew's Church, Psalter Lane | Music Festival Horn Quartet Concert |
| 5 | 12 Nov 2022 | Highfield Trinity Church | Lament COVID-19 Memorial Event |
| 6 | 23 Nov 2022 | Gulliver’s Kingdom | North Star Schools Event |
| 7 | 27 Nov 2022 | Christ Church, Dore | Advent Carol Service |
| 8 | 2 Dec 2022 | St John's Church, Owlerton | Snowflake Switch On Event |
| 9 | 3 Dec 2022 | Woodseats Allotments | Carol singing for Children’s Hospital |
| 10 | 10 Dec 2022 | St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield | Charity Christmas Concert |
| 11 | 11 Dec 2022 | St Catherine of Siena Church | Brass & Voices Concert |
| 12 | 14 Dec 2022 | Cutlers' Hall | Master Cutler’s Christmas Carols |
| 13 | 17 Dec 2022 | City Centre | Carol singing for Children’s Hospital |
| 14 | 18 Dec 2022 | St John's Church, Owlerton | Carol Service |
| 15 | 20 Dec 2022 | Mount Tabor Church, Parson Cross | Carol concert |
| 16 | 8 Jan 2023 | St John's Church, Owlerton | Epiphany cafe church |
| 17 | 13 Jan 2023 | St John's Church, Owlerton | Choir Friends New Year Event |
| 18 | 15 Jan 2023 | Christ Church, Stannington | Family service |
| 19 | 29 Jan 2023 | St John's Church, Abbeydale | Evensong |
| 20 | 2 Feb 2023 | St Matthew's Church, Carver Street | Candlemas |
| 21 | 4 Mar 2023 | St Matthew's Church, Carver Street | Workshop with Hilary Davan Wetton |
| 22 | 12 Mar 2023 | St Mary's Church, Ecclesfield | Evensong |
| 23 | 18 Mar 2023 | St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield | Classical Sheffield concert |
| 24 | 25 Mar 2023 | Mount Tabor Church, Parson Cross | Lent Lament event |
| 25 | 29 Mar 2023 | MAGNA | Get Up To Speed with STEM event |
| 26 | 7 Apr 2023 | Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses | Good Friday meditations |
| 27 | 23 Apr 2023 | St John the Baptist, Hooton Roberts | Evensong |
| 28 | 14 May 2023 | St Mary's Church, Ecclesfield | Evensong |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | 21 May 2023 | Sheffield Cathedral | Evensong |
| 30 | 4 Jun 2023 | Bradford Cathedral | Eucharist |
| 31 | 4 Jun 2023 | Bradford Cathedral | Evensong |
| 32 | 18 Jun 2023 | Beauchief Abbey | Evensong |
| 33 | 25 Jun 2023 | St Mark's Church, Broomhill | Eucharist |
| 34 | 8 Jul 2023 | High Green School | School Summer Fair |
| 35 | 9 Jul 2023 | Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses | Evensong |
| 36 | 21 Jul 2023 | St John the Baptist, Hooton Roberts | Evensong (Clerks only) |
| 37 | 21 Jul 2023 | Earl of Strafford, Hooton Roberts | Songs in the pub (Clerks only) |
| 38 | 29 Jul 2023 | Ripon Cathedral | Procession service |
| 39 | 29 Jul 2023 | Ripon Cathedral | Evensong |
| 40 | 30 Jul 2023 | Ripon Cathedral | Eucharist |
| 41 | 30 Jul 2023 | Ripon Cathedral | Evensong |

*Singing workshops*

Over the last year, we have continued to expand the number of Sheffield schools with whom we have worked, enabling us to further develop and improve our approach - including in how we communicate with schools, set expectations for how we will work with them, and how we tailor our provision to meet their needs. In 2022-23, we ran a total of 63 workshops in 13 different schools and other community venues that delivered high quality music education activities to over 2,500 children.

One school said: *"The children thoroughly enjoyed the workshops. They talked about it for a long time afterwards. They really enjoyed watching the videos and seeing what was possible."*

*Promoting choral music*

We have continued to develop creative and innovative ways of promoting the English choral tradition and sharing our music with new and diverse groups of people who wouldn't seek it out or otherwise experience it:

- Our *Lament* events at Remembrance 2022 and Lent 2023 brought to life artwork illustrating the various stages of lament that people may be feeling, including in the wake of the pandemic. We sang a piece of choral music for each stage to help create a reflective space for people to process their experiences.
- We started a new *Reason to Sing!* project with St Mary's Bramall Lane Community Centre in which we celebrate the role that music plays in people's lives by listening to the stories behind people's favourite songs and matching them to pieces of choral music from our repertoire through the similar emotions they express.

Through both of these projects we have continued to take our choral music outside of church services to new audiences and contexts in order to introduce people to its beauty and

relevance. We have also developed a new Evensong page on our website explaining and promoting the service of Choral Evensong.

*Communications*

We have developed our communications with our Friends and other supporters through the ten editions of our email Newsletter that were sent over the course of the year. The number of subscribers more than doubled from 92 at the end of July 2022, to 209 at the end of July 2023.

We were delighted to have our origin story and activity as a choir featured in a double page article in the Spring 2023 edition of Classical Music Magazine.

In May 2023, we were filmed for a documentary about the service of Evensong, in which we will feature alongside the choirs of Winchester Cathedral, Truro Cathedral and St John's College, Cambridge. The Producer is keen to showcase our community-based approach to sustaining and sharing high-quality choral music - particularly the way we are offering services of Choral Evensong to local parish churches. We expect the documentary to be available in 2024.

*Impact*

Through the year we received very positive feedback and a number of strong endorsements from the churches and communities for whom we have sung that demonstrate our impact and the extent to which they value our work.

*"It was wonderful to welcome the Steel City Choristers to St Mary's Ecclesfield. The choir were marvellous! It was such a special service as it is probably thirty or forty years since Choral Evensong was last sung at St Mary's."*
**Revd Tim Gill, Vicar, St Mary's Church Ecclesfield**

*"I formally write on behalf of the Dean and Chapter of Ripon Cathedral for visiting Ripon and enhancing the worship of the congregations over the weekend. It was excellent. I, and so many people in the congregation of Ripon Cathedral were impressed with the quality and tone of your music, covering the broad range from the well-known hymns 'Lord of the Dance' and 'When the saints go marching' to Bruckner's Os Justi and a Mass setting by Stanford. It is a phenomenal achievement to produce the standard of music you did, which was on a par with cathedral standards without the resources usually associated with a cathedral music foundation. You are all to be congratulated on the work that has been put in to create a choir that is has professional standards and with all choir members seeming to enjoy the experience so much You all work so hard and will have wonderfully full diaries, but if you could return to Ripon to enhance our worship sometime soon, that would be wonderful."*
**Revd Canon Michael Gisbourne, Canon Precentor, Ripon Cathedral**

*"Steel City Choristers are a talented yet humble group of musicians who in a very short time have made an impression in many postcodes in Sheffield and beyond. They are a fabulous resource to the diocese and greatly supportive even to small parishes, like ourselves in Hooton Roberts: a rural village fighting to keep our church open. Our experience of the choristers here was uplifting and mutually supportive."*
**Liza Nash, Church Warden, St John the Baptist Church, Hooton Roberts**

*"Steel City Choristers look good, sound good and bring an extra spark."*
**Fiona Law, Director of Music, St Matthew's Church Carver Street**

*"We were delighted to have Steel City Choristers lead our Advent Service this year. The choir sounded absolutely fantastic – it was a real blessing to have such high quality choral music in a local church setting. Our own choir dwindled and disbanded a few years ago, so to welcome Steel City Choristers to lead us in choral worship was inspiring and invigorating. Their vision to serve a wide and diverse range of communities across the city and Diocese is a gift. I've already recommended them to other churches in the area and very much look forward to inviting them back to Christ Church."*
**Rev'd Andy Patrick, Vicar of Christ Church, Dore**

*"Thank you for the wonderful contribution Steel City Choristers made to my carol service, I have received countless positive comments on how lovely it was."*
**Dame Julie Kenny DBE KL, The Master Cutler, 2022-23**

*"Steel City Choristers were amazing. It was a joy to see them perform with confidence, enthusiasm and real talent. We genuinely recommend them, not only for their high standard of performance, but for their work developing and engaging young people."*
**Colonel P Bates, Clerk to the Company of Cutlers**

*Reflections on the success of our model*

Our aim is to pioneer a new model for sustaining and diversifying access to the all-age English choral tradition. To be viable, a choir needs people to sing, people to sing for, and money to cover its costs. Over the last year we have sought to identify the features of our model that make this possible. We think that:

We recruit singers because:

- Our intensive musical education is free and first class with the opportunity to sing in a wide and diverse range of churches and other venues;
- Our youthwork and wider approach puts children at the centre of what we do and means they have fun, build friendships and feel valued; and
- We are independent and don't sing every Sunday morning, so we are more accessible to those who want to sing but who would not feel comfortable joining a church, as well as to churchgoers who wouldn't want to leave their church in order to join a choir.

We have people to sing for because:

- Churches and other communities invite us to sing for them, which means that we are not responsible for attracting a congregation or raising an audience; and
- We always tailor our offer to meet the needs of the churches and communities we sing for, so they feel grateful and well served.

We charge no fees to our singers or hosts, but raise money because:

- Choristers' parents value our free musical education, and although under no obligation to give to the charity, many do;

- The organisations for whom we sing value our music and often choose to give us a gift in recognition of this;
- We attract giving from individuals who support our charitable aims; and
- We attract grant funding from bodies that recognise the educational and/or artistic value of our work.

*Performance of fundraising activities*

We do not charge fees to the children or adults to sing with us, to the schools or communities for whom we deliver singing workshops, or to the hosts for whom we sing. This means that money will never be a barrier to people accessing choral music. Instead, our aim is to develop a diverse and sustainable funding model based on income from those who recognise the high quality of our music education and the value of our work to promote and sustain the cathedral choral tradition.

We are hugely grateful to the growing number of people supporting the charity financially as Friends of the choir - up by 11 to 33, including many parents of choristers. We are greatly encouraged by how the Friends scheme has grown in less than two years to become a significant source of income. Our aim is to continue to grow the amount of regular giving from Friends to create a sustainable and engaged source of local support from people who value our work and see us as an asset for the city.

Many host communities also gave financially in gratitude for us singing for them, and this source of income has grown over the last year, in part reflecting an increase in the number of our singing engagements.

We developed a business sponsor strategy with associated promotional material this year that led to very welcome support from the charitable foundation of the international Sheffield-based firm, Gripple. We hope to further develop relationships with Sheffield businesses in the coming year.

Meanwhile, we have worked incredibly hard to secure grant funding to underpin our finances while we build support from Friends, hosts and sponsors. Over the course of the year we received funding from 16 local and national grant funders. We remain aware, however, that grant applications are very resource-intensive to plan and write, and they are very competitive, and hence future income from grant funding cannot be taken for granted.

In total, the income we secured meant that we were able to not only fully fund the activity we set out to deliver in 2022-23, despite this requiring our operational budget to almost double from the previous financial year, but also grow our reserves, and end the year with a healthy surplus to carry forward towards costs in 2023-24.

Our fundraising was led by one of our trustees on a voluntary basis, with only a minimal payment to a fundraising professional for one specific piece of advice on how to strengthen an unsuccessful multi-year bid to the Arts Council. Unfortunately, the revised application was also turned down.

The charity remains on a steep growth trajectory, with the range of opportunities opening up for the choir continuing to expand, including the possibility in future of both domestic and international tours. The charity also remains heavily reliant on the goodwill of a wide range of volunteers who give their time and skills pro bono to support the planning, delivery and administration of the choir's activities. While we end this year in a relatively strong financial

position, the trustees therefore do not underestimate the scale of the ongoing challenge to secure sufficient funds to grow and maintain the choir on a sustainable basis.

## Financial Review

A significant increase in expenditure in 2022-23 was matched by strong growth in all forms of income.

*Expenditure*

Total expenditure in 2022-23 was £34,266 of which £32,421 was on in-year operational costs (the balance being costs accrued from 2021-22, and funds received that were then spent or given to charity on behalf of others). This represents a significant increase of around 50% on the total expenditure in the previous year, driven largely by a large growth in musician fees given our greater volume of activity, increased costs of our rehearsal venue, and the costs of our residential tour to Ripon.

Our overheads remain low, with 62% of expenditure being on fees to the musicians who deliver our musical education, and a further 25% on expenditure on costs directly associated with musical activities. Non-musical expenditure was therefore only 13%, comprising 5% invested in training and building our choir community and 8% spent on administrative costs such as printing, publicity, and insurance.

Expenditure this year included £563 for costs incurred in 2021-22 comprising a £500 gift to St John's Church Owlerton for use of their building for our rehearsals, and a £63 payment to our Director of Music for a community workshop delivered in August 2022.

*Income*

We secured income from a diverse range of sources in 2022-23. Our operational income (total income less the funds received to give or spend on behalf of others), totalled £56,083. Of this, 68% was from 16 different grants, 23% was from Friends and other individual donors, 5% was from the organisations and communities for whom we sang.

Total income in 2022-23 was £57,476, comprising:

Restricted grants totalling £13,549:

- Awards for All - £9,614 for a *Reasons to Sing!* Project with St Mary's Bramall Lane
- Sheffield Council - £1,971 for a *Be a Chorister at Christmas* event and schools work
- Sheffield City Council Covid-19 Memorial Fund - £1,964 for a *Lament* event

Unrestricted grants totalling £24,756:

- D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust - £4,000
- Ecclesfield Welfare and Educational Charities - £1,000
- Golsonscott Foundation - £1,000
- Gripple Foundation - £246
- Ouseley Church Music Trust - £3,000
- Sarah Nulty Power of Music Foundation - £500
- Sheffield Burgesses Education Foundation - £2,500

- Sheffield Grammar School Education Foundation - £3,000
- Sheffield Town Trust - £2,500
- Sheffield's Worshipful Company of Cutlers - £750
- St Mark's Church Grenoside - £250
- Williams Church Music Trust - £5,000
- Worrall Male Voice Choir Musical Grants Foundation - £1,000

Donations totalling £15,663:

- Giving from Friends of the choir - £12,477
- Gifts and donations from those for whom we sang - £2,931
- Other donations from individuals or organisations - £255

Other income totalling £3,517:

- Contributions towards our tour to Ripon - £1,390
- Contributions for other goods/services - £627
- Gift aid on 2021-22 giving - £735
- Giving to pass on to other charities - £765

*End year position*

At the end of the year, the charity held £36,718 in cash, of which £3,908 was restricted funding for expenditure on our Reasons to Sing! project that is due in 2023-24. The charity does not hold any investments.

In light of Trustees' Reserves Policy to maintain a reserve equivalent to approximately six months' operational costs, and the projected growth in these costs in future years, an additional £10,000 was added to reserves, bringing the total held to £17,000. The surplus cash carried forward into 2023-14 was therefore £19,718 (funds brought forward from last year were £13,508 - a rounding error means this appeared as £13,507 last year's accounts).

The Trustees do not have any uncertainty about the charity continuing as a going concern.

## Structure, Governance and Management

Steel City Choristers is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Foundation) and governed by a board of Trustees. There are no external persons or bodies entitled to appoint Trustees to the board. All appointments to the board are made by the Trustees on the basis of people's relevant skills and experience.

The charity does not have any employees, but rather engages music professionals on a freelance basis, paying fees for the services they render.

The board of Trustees delegates specific responsibilities to three committees each tasked with leadership in relation to a number of strategic aims:

1. Operations Committee
    - **To Sing:** Provide regular opportunities for choir members to rehearse, receive specialist musical tuition and perform

- **To Grow**: Recruit new children and adults to sing with us to both grow and diversify our membership and retain those we have
- **To Safeguard**: Ensure we operate in a safe and lawful manner at all times

2. Partnerships, Projects and Communications Committee
   - **To Reach Out:** Establish relationships with new partners and host communities to diversify those hearing and appreciating our singing
   - **To Innovate:** Design and deliver ways to engage children in choral music and present it to audiences who wouldn't otherwise have access to it
   - **To Promote**: Raise public awareness and interest in Steel City Choristers
3. Finance and Governance Committee
   - **To Thrive:** Ensure the sustainability and financial viability of the organisation
   - **To Comply:** Ensure the propriety and efficiency of our organisational governance and reporting

The Trustees, and in particular the Chair, are advised by the charity's Patrons and Advisors – details of whom are available on the Meet the Team page of our website.

The Trustees managing the charity in 2022-23 were:

- Kate Caroe (Chair) – a home educator and founding co-director of OutoftheBox Training, a not-for-profit organisation supporting personal and community wellbeing through the power of story and play.
- Jeremy Dawson (Treasurer) – Professor of health management at the University of Sheffield, Chair of a local orchestra (Hallam Sinfonia), and former Lay Clerk at Sheffield Cathedral.
- Chris Caroe (Secretary) – a civil servant at the Department for Education.
- Tony Laycock – a retired primary school headteacher (Trustee until July 2023).
- Yinka Oluwole – a doctor and staff governor at the Sheffield Children's Hospital and Non-Executive Director at Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust.
- Angela Holman – a teacher and choir parent.
- Gill O'Connor – a teacher and choir parent (trustee from July 2023).

There are no corporate Trustees.

No Trustees hold title to property belonging to the charity.

There are no funds held as custodian Trustees on behalf of others.

There are no exemptions from disclosure.

*Risks*

The principal risks facing the charity and how these are mitigated are detailed below.

**Volunteer risk: that we do not continue to benefit from the very high level of pro bono support we rely on to plan, delivery and administer the choir's activity**

We put relationships first and make efforts to protect the wellbeing of all those who contribute their time and skills voluntarily to enable the successful operation of the choir. We continue to identify tasks that can be delegated and shared between a wider group of people to reduce our heavy reliance on a few individuals, and also to weigh up the feasibility of incorporating additional activities within our budget to be undertaken on a paid basis.

**Recruitment risk: that we are unable to sustain the number of children and adults singing that we need to operate a viable choir.**

Mitigation: We recruit children to sing in the choir without prejudice to their background or prior experience and do not charge fees, so that money is never a barrier to singing with us. We maximise word of mouth and social media opportunities to encourage children to audition to join us, especially in September at the beginning of the school year. Throughout the year, we tell children about the choir as we deliver singing workshops in schools and community settings and hold a 'Be a Chorister at Christmas' event to create an opportunity for children to experience singing with us. Our focus on building relationships through our youth work and choir socials supports retention of existing choristers. We encourage boys whose voices change to continue singing with us, including through specialist music training during rehearsal time. We recruit experienced adult singers for the lower parts mainly via word of mouth.

**Funding risk: that we are unable to secure the funding we need to sustain our planned activities.**

Mitigation: We have developed a diverse funding model based on a number of different sources of income. Our aim is to reduce our dependence on grant funding over time as we build a broader base of local supporters who see us as an asset for the city and give regularly to support us. We set an annual budget at the start of the year having regard to funds currently available and likely future income. Financial controls ensure all expenditure remains within budget. We maintain a financial reserve equivalent to approximately six months core operating costs, in line with our Reserves Policy published at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/policies providing resilience to continue core operations to address any significant shortfall in funding, should the need arise.

**Safeguarding risk: that a safeguarding incident occurs despite the policies and procedures in place to keep everyone safe.**

Mitigation: We have members of our trained team of chaperones present at every event involving children, and appropriate checks and training for all adults who are involved with the choir. Our robust safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed at least annually in line with Charity Commission guidance.

**Retention risk: that our Director of Music resigns and that we are faced with the cost, disruption and uncertainty of recruiting a replacement.**

Mitigation: The Trustees have developed a positive and collaborative relationship with the Director of Music and are confident that she shares their strong sense of ownership and pride in relation to the operation and future plans for the choir. The Trustees are committed to offering the Director of Music exciting and vibrant opportunities for creative musical expression and to supporting her ongoing professional development, backed where appropriate with appropriate funding. The Director of Music has agreed to provide us with three months' notice of any intention or plan to step down from her role.

STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

# Statement of Financial Activities 2022-23

These accounts cover the period from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total funds | Last year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| **Income** | | | | |
| From predecessor organisation | - | - | **-** | 14,653 |
| Donations - Friends | 12,477 | - | **12,477** | 3,718 |
| Donations - Other | 255 | - | **255** | 137 |
| Income from performances | 2,931 | - | **2,931** | 869 |
| Grants | 24,746 | 13,549 | **38,295** | 15,500 |
| Contributions towards domestic tours | 1,390 | | **1,390** | - |
| Contributions for other goods/services | 627 | - | **627** | 612 |
| Gift Aid on previous year's giving | 735 | - | **735** | - |
| Contributions for charitable donations | - | 765 | **765** | 913 |
| Miscellaneous | - | - | **-** | 34 |
| **Total income** | **43,162** | **14,314** | **57,476** | **36,436** |
| **Expenditure** | | | | |
| Director of Music fees | 7,803 | 6,368 | **14,171** | 8,082 |
| Other musician fees | 3,480 | 2,412 | **5,892** | 3,995 |
| Director of Music recruitment | - | - | **-** | 1,073 |
| Training | 559 | - | **559** | 659 |
| Recordings | - | 900 | **900** | 2,700 |
| Music purchase | 646 | 709 | **1,354** | 960 |
| Travel | 145 | - | **145** | 346 |
| Venue hire | 2,128 | 400 | **2,528** | 653 |
| Insurance/subscriptions | 577 | - | **577** | 383 |
| Independent inspection of accounts | 250 | - | **250** | |
| DBS checks | 50 | - | **50** | 13 |
| Web hosting | 101 | - | **101** | 85 |
| Printing, postage, promotional materials | 211 | 303 | **514** | 910 |
| Advertising | 120 | 339 | **459** | 279 |
| Social events, food & drink, gifts | 1,163 | - | **1,163** | 1,141 |
| Domestic tours | 3,039 | - | **3,039** | |
| Other specific project delivery costs | - | 299 | **299** | |
| Miscellaneous | 419 | - | **419** | 737 |
| Payments for specific goods/services | 518 | - | **518** | |
| Charitable donations | - | 765 | **765** | 913 |
| Cost incurred the previous year | 563 | | **563** | 0 |
| **Total expenditure** | **21,772** | **12,495** | **34,266** | **22,929** |
| Net Surplus | 21,390 | 1,819 | 23,210 | 13,508 |
| Balance brought forward from last year | 11,420 | 2,088 | **13,508** | - |
| **Total funds carried forward** | **32,810** | **3,908** | **36,718** | **13,508** |

## Assets and Liabilities

The only asset held by Steel City Choristers as at 31 August 2023 was cash (including reserves), as follows:

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total funds | Last year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Cash | 15,810 | 3,908 | 19,718 | 6,508 |
| Reserves | 17,000 | - | 17,000 | 7,000 |
| **Total** | **32,810** | **3,908** | **36,718** | **13,508** |

The £3,908 restricted funds held at the end of 2022-23 are from the grant we received from Awards for All to deliver our Reasons to Sing! project. The project runs until October 2023 and hence these funds are to cover the project costs that fall in our 2023-24 financial year.

There were no liabilities and no debtors or creditors.

## Payments to Trustees

No payments were made to Trustees in 2022-22 for any work conducted as Trustees.

A total of £916.17 was paid to four Trustees for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred when these could not be reasonably paid directly from the Steel City Choristers bank account.

A total of £1,338 was paid to one trustee who undertook paid work for the charity, following all necessary procedures being followed in line with charity guidance.

## Declarations

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Signature** |  |  |
| **Full Name** | Kate Caroe | Jeremy Dawson |
| **Position** | Chair | Treasurer |
| **Date** | 8 November 2023 | |

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

# Independent examiner's report on the accounts

## Section A Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/directors/ members of**

Steel City Choristers

**On accounts for the year ended**

31 August 2023

| Charity no.: | 1195909 | Company no.: | |
|---|---|---|---|

**Set out on pages**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 August 2023

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act").

I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination, I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that:

- Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- The accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:**

Venusia Ltd
Apt 316
Wimbledon Central
21-33 Worple Road
London - SW19 4BJ
www.venusia.co.uk

**Date:** 01 November 2023

**Name:** Gerald Gurriet

**Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):** Association of International Accountants

**Address:**

Venusia Ltd

London, SW19 4BJ

Apt 316 Wimbledon Central, 21 – 33 Worple Road

**STEEL CITY CHORISTERS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1195909

# Accounts

STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

# Trustees' Annual Report

**For the period**

**23 September 2021 to 31 August 2022**

**Charity name: Steel City Choristers**

**Charity registration number: 1195909**

**Principal address: 2 The Grove, Totley, S17 4AS**

# Steel City Choristers

## Report of the Trustees for the year ending 31 August 2022

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report and independently examined accounts for the period between the constitution of the charity on 23 September 2021 and the end of our financial year on 31 August 2022.

## Chair's Report

Our new dynamic and innovative charity makes high quality choral music more accessible to children and communities in and around Sheffield. Our choir, rooted in the Anglican choral tradition, offers children aged 6-18 a first-class musical education singing alongside experienced adults. We serve a diverse range of churches and other communities with a focus on those who would not otherwise have access to choral music. We also deliver high quality curriculum-linked singing workshops in schools and communities. We do not charge fees to our choristers, the communities for whom we sing or to schools, so that money is never a barrier to people accessing choral music. Our lean operating model is funded mainly via gifts from our Friends as well as a range of core cost and project grants.

We were founded as a community organisation in 2020, following the sudden closure of the Sheffield Cathedral Choir, and registered as an incorporated charity in September 2021. Growing from our roots in the Church of England, we have been greatly encouraged by the support we have received from across Sheffield and the country for our passion and commitment to sustaining and growing a community of trained choristers, and to making choral music more accessible to churches and other communities in and around Sheffield.

We believe in the power of music to change lives. High quality choral music has a transcendent quality that brings a wide range of benefits to the listener. This is recognised and reflected in many patterns of sacred worship – and we are privileged to be able to share our music as part of the worship in an increasing number of churches. These benefits are also enjoyed by many people in non-religious settings. Wherever we sing, and however people hear us, we know our music can help meet people's emotional and spiritual needs.

We have successfully established and grown our choir in the face and wake of the COVID pandemic and now have a wide range of activities both underway and planned for the future. The quality of our work is endorsed by the backing we have secured from several high profile Patrons and the confidence of both the internationally renowned group, The Sixteen, and English Touring Opera, with whom we have worked and performed in recent months.

We are indebted to Joshua Stephens, our founding Director of Music, for his willingness to innovate and experiment with us as we established our new and creative approach to sustaining and sharing the English choral tradition. He has made a huge contribution to the success of Steel City Choristers over the last year. We were at the same time both saddened and absolutely thrilled by his appointment as sub-organist at Winchester Cathedral. We trust that his experience with Steel City Choristers, which included performing to 600 school children from the deck of a theme park pirate ship and drawing out the similarities between Mr Blue Sky and Byrd's Mass for Four Voices, will shape his approach to demystifying and widening access to choral music throughout the rest of his career at the top echelons of his profession. We wish him every success as he pursues his passion for choral music from within the Church of England.

It is with great excitement that we have entered a new chapter in our story with the appointment in June 2022 of Eleanor Jarvis as our new Director of Music. With a degree from the University of Manchester in music with emphasis on conducting, Eleanor has the skill and experience to help us build on our successes, and move from strength to strength over the years to come. In particular, we are excited about the fit between our vision and values and Eleanor's passion and love of singing and her desire to inspire children and make choral music accessible and inviting. She is young and talented, and will help us continue to sing to a really high standard, while bringing new ideas for our repertoire, and strengthening relationships across our choir community and with churches across the city.

2021-22 has been a year of consolidation. We started the year as a newly constituted charity inheriting the fragments of vision, kernel of community and sporadic activities that it had been possible for our predecessor organisation to establish during the COVID pandemic. We ended the year looking to the future with our new Director of Music and having:

- recruited a range of new children and adult singers;
- developed our work with junior choristers and changing voices;
- embedded a programme of youth work within our choir rehearsals;
- designed and launched our education programme in schools and communities;
- established relationships with a diverse range of churches and other hosts;
- attracted over 40 individuals as Friends of the Choir; and
- secured £15,500 in new grant funding.

A particular highlight, that reflects the essence of our vision for sharing the joys of choral music, has been our innovative Reasons to Sing! project, delivered in partnership with Parson Cross Initiative. We are grateful to the community of Parson Cross for their warm welcome and the enthusiastic way in which they engaged to share and make music with us. The project leaves a legacy not just of video and discussion note resources that introduce people to the joys of choral music and invite them to explore the role that songs play in helping them express their emotions, but also a model for further community engagement, that we hope to secure funding to replicate in 2022-23.

The Trustees are enthused and passionate about their vision to share the joys of choral music and excited by the learning that we are generating about how to do that in an effective and sustainable way. We are grateful to the children and adults who have contributed to the success of Steel City Choristers in 2021-22, and look with confidence and optimism to the future as we serve the children and communities of Sheffield together.

**Kate Caroe**
Chair of Trustees

## Objectives and Activities

*Our purposes*

The purposes of the charity are:

1. For the public benefit, to advance education and training of children and young people, particularly those living in or educated in Sheffield and the surrounding area, in the subject of music and in particular choral music, primarily but not exclusively by

    a) creating opportunities for children, young people and adults to sing alongside each other to the highest musical standards; and

    b) promoting and delivering musical and choral education and training to children and young people, regardless of their socio-economic or ethnic background and irrespective of their prior experience.

2. To advance public education in and appreciation of music and in particular choral music and related activities in all their aspects particularly in Sheffield and the surrounding area, primarily but not exclusively by presenting public performances and producing digital content, particularly for communities that would not otherwise have access to choral music.

*Our activities*

At the heart of our work is the musical education and training we deliver to children and young people. This includes both our singing workshops in schools and communities and our provision for our choristers.

Steel City Choristers offers an outreach programme that aims to inspire primary age children to sing and join choirs. As well as arranging singing workshops in community settings, we have a growing number of relationships with schools, particularly in more disadvantaged areas of the city. Our singing workshops can be linked to the Key Stage 2 Model Music Curriculum or otherwise tailored to schools' needs. They are of a nature and quality that schools may not have the expertise or capacity to deliver themselves. We leave schools with resources designed for non-music specialists to enable them to follow up on our sessions and continue to help children develop key musical skills. We signpost children to local singing opportunities - including through information about Steel City Choristers and how to arrange an informal audition to join us (see steelcitychoristers.org.uk/join). We delivered a total of ten singing workshops in 2021-22.

Children and young people aged between 6 and 18 who join Steel City Choristers are trained to sing to the highest musical standards alongside experienced adult singers. We recruit choristers openly without prejudice to children's socio-economic and ethnic background and their prior singing experience. We are absolutely committed to the principles of children and adults singing with Steel City Choristers free of any fees or charges and to welcoming children and adult singers of all faiths and none. We help our choristers to understand the music they sing and the contexts and venues in which they sing it, including through the youth work that we integrate into our rehearsals that also helps to build relationships among the choristers.

During term time, Steel City Choristers' regular pattern is to offer our choristers three hours of rehearsal time split across two evenings, with separate specialist provision for our junior choristers to help them develop a firm foundation of musical skills. Our teenage boys with changed voices rehearse for two hours a week during term time, and the Clerks (adult singers) rehearse for 90 minutes each week.

Choristers who have sung with the choir for at least a term and who are aged 9 or over are also eligible to receive 20 minutes of one-to-one singing lessons with our teacher, Mrs Vivien Pike, every two weeks in term time.

As a choir, we prioritise singing for communities that do not have experience of, or would not otherwise have access to, choral music. Our aim is to sing in a diverse range of locations and types of venue across Sheffield. We are passionate about the power of music to change lives and want to take it to where people are so they can benefit from its inspiration and beauty.

Public performances in 2021-22 included:

| Date | Venue | Event |
|---|---|---|
| 19/09/21 | Beauchief Abbey | Evensong |
| 19/09/21 | St John's, Owlerton | Morning Service |
| 13/11/21 | Chesterfield Parish Church | Devotional Requiem for Remembrance |
| 24/11/21 | Gulliver's Valley | North Star schools science event |
| 03/12/21 | St John's, Owlerton | Sheffield Children's Hospital Snowflake switch on |
| 11/12/21 | Moor Market | Carol singing in aid of Sheffield Children's hospital |
| 19/12/21 | St John's, Owlerton | Christmas Carol Service |
| 23/01/22 | St Matthew's, Carver Street | Mass with members of The Sixteen |
| 06/02/22 | Doncaster Minster | Festal Evensong for the Queen's anniversary |
| 02/03/22 | St John's, Owlerton | Ash Wednesday Service |
| 23/03/22 | MAGNA | GUTS Science event for schools |
| 26/03/22 | Cutlers Hall | Service in celebration of a 60th birthday |
| 03/04/22 | Firth Hall | St. John Passion with English Touring Opera |
| 07/05/22 | Mount Tabor Church | Reasons to Sing! concert |
| 14/05/22 | Sheffield Winter Garden | Pop up performance |
| 21/05/22 | St Mark's, Broomhill | Evensong |
| 19/06/22 | Beauchief Abbey | Evensong |
| 03/07/22 | Shrewsbury Almshouses | An ordination anniversary celebration Evensong |
| 10/07/22 | Holy Trinity, Millhouses | Evensong |

We are also passionate about developing partnerships with local communities to promote awareness and appreciation of choral music. This year, we worked in collaboration with social inclusion charity, Parson Cross Initiative (PXI), on a project called 'Reasons to Sing!' that explored the stories behind people's favourite songs and made connections between these and pieces in the choral repertoire. In line with our core purpose, this helped make choral music more accessible and relevant to people in Parson Cross and beyond. The project, with a significant budget of £11k majority funded by Awards for All, was a major undertaking for the choir in terms of both community engagement and audio and video recording. Details of the project, including six videos each with two themed stories and songs are available at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/reasons.

Following the appointment of Joshua Stephens as sub-organist at Winchester Cathedral, the Trustees launched a national advertising campaign to appoint a new Director of Music. A robust selection process resulted in the appointment of Eleanor Jarvis. Eleanor is a professional musician having graduated in 2022 from the University of Manchester with a Bachelor of Music with emphasis on conducting. She has experience leading a good variety of ensembles, with a grounding in both choral and instrumental conducting. She is also a committed singer, having been a chorister since the age of ten. The Trustees consider it a significant achievement, as a relatively newly established organisation, to have attracted such a talented new Director of Music to lead the choir into the future.

*Statement on public benefit*

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. This means that we have

- made decisions to ensure our charity's purpose provides benefit
- managed risks of detriment or harm to our charity's beneficiaries
- made decisions about who benefits in ways that are consistent with our purpose
- made decisions to make sure any personal benefits are no more than incidental.

We have exercised our discretion:

- in accordance with our charity's purpose, and not outside of it
- for the public benefit
- with regard to the commission's public benefit guidance where relevant
- in accordance with the general framework for Trustee decision making.

*The role of volunteers*

Volunteers have played a critical role in the operation and governance of the charity this year, including our:

- **Chaperones**: In line with our safeguarding procedure all choir rehearsals and events in which our choristers are taking part are supervised by at least one chaperone. We ended the year with five chaperones in total, four of whom are parents of choristers.
- **Junior Chorister Lead**: Our ability to provide tailored musical education to our youngest and newest choristers has been critical to nurturing and supporting them to develop a firm foundation of musical skills and progress in time to full participation in the choir. Our Junior Chorister Lead has volunteered her considerable skills and experience free of charge this year.
- **Clerks**: While many adult members of the choir have in the past commanded a salary or financial scholarship for the high quality of their singing, all of them sing with Steel City Choristers as volunteers without payment.
- **Advisors & Patrons**: The advice and support of a range of experienced and accomplished musicians and leaders has been invaluable to the Trustees as they steered the charity through its first year.
- **Trustees**: All Trustees share a passion for seeing choral music more widely sung and appreciated across the city. They bring a diverse range of relevant skills and experience to the leadership of the organisation. All of them volunteer their time to lead and govern the charity.

## Achievements and Performance

*Establishing a reputation for high quality choral music*

The challenge of COVID meant that the choir, which was founded September 2020, did not sing regularly together throughout its first year. Since September 2021 Steel City Choristers has thrived, developing a reputation for quality that has led to us securing over 10,000 online views of our recording of “It’s a Wonderful World” in support of the “Sing the Change!” COP26 project and singing with members of The Sixteen and English Touring Opera..

The high standard of our music making is endorsed by our Patrons.

> “The standard of performance is exceptional for such a choir.”
>
> Elizabeth Watts (Patron)

> “Steel City Choristers has rapidly developed very high standards. The choir is directed by an exceptional musician who enjoys the trust and respect of all its members. As a result, the musical education given to the choristers is excellent and the choir achieves high standards in a range of repertoire. Equally significant is the evident benefit and fulfilment the choir provides for its audiences, who by intention include many people who have never had the opportunity to appreciate first-hand the beauty of choral music. I commend them without reservation.”
>
> Hilary Davan Wetton (Patron)

*Delivering benefits through our singing workshops in schools and communities*

Our singing workshops in schools are tailored to their needs, supporting delivery of the Model Music Curriculum. Our community workshops are open to all children aged 6-12. We are giving children the opportunity to sing and encouraging and resourcing teachers to include singing in the school day. As well as providing the basis for a solid musical education, singing has well documented positive effects for mental and physical wellbeing.

*Delivering benefits to our choristers and adult singers*

Steel City Choristers ended the year with 18 Choristers (singing treble) and three teenage boys with Changing Voices (singing lower parts). We are committed to promoting diversity and continue to seek avenues to pursue this. Mid year, we undertook to understand the diversity of our choristers. We found that:

> 21% were an ethnicity other than White
> 53% were female
> 26% spoke a language other than English at home
> 11% an identified special need (e.g. learning, medical, physical)
> Choristers came from seven different postcode areas across the city.

Our Choristers have shown great commitment and have worked hard throughout the year, thus benefiting hugely from the choral training, the wide variety of performance opportunities and the singing lessons we have provided.

To lower the barriers to joining us, particularly for younger children, this year we have developed a specially tailored programme of music education for our junior choristers. Using songs and musical activities based on the Kodály method delivered by our new specialist Junior Chorister Lead, these sessions are enabling our junior choristers to make rapid progress.

We have developed our provision for our boys with changing voices, so that teenage boys receive a supported transition to sing in their new voice. Each week they rehearse with the full choir and with the adult clerks, and also to enjoy a specially tailored session. All of our children and young people, but particularly our Changing Voices, have benefited from singing alongside our seven adult Clerks (singing lower parts), who act as positive role models.

We offer our choristers singing lessons with our highly experienced singing teacher. This 1:1 vocal coaching is of huge value developing not only the children's voices but their personal confidence - and making a significant impact on the standard to which the whole choir sings. The proportion of choristers accessing regular singing lessons (with our teacher or their own) has grown from 70% to over 90% through the course of the year.

We have developed a programme of youth work activities that are integrated into our rehearsal times. Separate sessions are run for our junior and more experienced choristers. The youth work has allowed the children to relax and have fun together, helping them bond and build friendships. We have also used our youth work sessions to help them reflect on their experience of singing in churches across a wide spectrum of different liturgical, theological and musical traditions. We have also helped them understand the events in the church calendar that we have sung services to celebrate. We have used OutoftheBox stories in our youthwork to create a safe space for open-ended enquiry and wondering, helping the children to dialogue, question and listen well in a playful and curious way.

In addition to the benefit of an intensive and high quality musical education, the benefits of singing with Steel City Choristers include developing teamwork and concentration skills as well as the mental and physical health benefits of singing itself.

*Delivering benefits to churches and other communities*

Hundreds of people of all ages have benefited from hearing Steel City Choristers sing. At one schools' science event alone we reached over 600 young people, and at each church service we sing we typically reach around 50-100 people. We also reach online audiences through our social media.

For the benefit of churches we have:

- **Promoted choral worship**: Offering choral services to churches of other musical traditions whose music is normally led by a guitar or band, to enable them to experience its beauty and value in worship.
- **Enabled choral worship**: Leading choral services in churches within the liturgical tradition that are unable to maintain their own high quality choir, and so either have less ambitious choral music or routinely have only said services.
- **Enhanced choral worship**: Singing together with other church choirs to enhance their choral services through more ambitious repertoire sung to a higher standard than they could provide on their own, often for public services marking special events.

In addition, this year we have sung for the benefit of:

- school children at two large science events - at one, Professor Brian Cox described our singing as "*absolutely beautiful*" and the host, Ruth Amos - Inventor and YouTuber, said "*After the chaos of everyone arriving, that was exactly what we needed - I feel nice and calm*" giving testimony to the power of high quality choral music to influence the mood of both individuals and large groups; and
- for passers by in the Sheffield Winter Garden and also in the city centre when we collected in aid of the Sheffield Children's Hospital.

*The benefits of Reasons to Sing!*

Reasons to Sing! was a year-long project delivered in partnership with social inclusion charity, Parson Cross Initiative (PXI) that concluded in May 2022.

Members of the PXI community told us about the songs that mattered the most to them or which evoked particularly strong memories. We matched these songs to six pieces from the traditional English choral repertoire through the themes of comfort, gratitude, loss, love, unity and structure. We arranged their songs to be sung by the choir and then delivered a series of workshops in Parson Cross to enable members of the community to learn to sing their six songs, and to then join with Steel City Choristers to perform them at a community concert, at which the choir also performed their six pieces.

The project benefited disadvantaged, vulnerable, and socially excluded people (including those hit hard by Covid through unemployment and low income) who have limited access to social opportunities and the arts, including choral singing, because of cultural barriers, a lack of disposable income, and a lack of opportunities locally. Being supported to perform with our high quality choir boosted their confidence and helped them believe in their own potential. Videos of people's stories shown at the community concert and the project T-shirts we gave everyone who performed helped build a strong sense of identity and pride in the PXI community. The concert was well attended and a wonderful demonstration of the ability of music to bring people together, including through an opportunity for the audience to join in a rousing encore of the local community anthem, Hi Ho Silver Lining.

The videos and discussion note resources available at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/reasons are a legacy of the project that offers ongoing benefit to the wider public, inviting them to appreciate both the joys and beauty of choral music and the wider role of songs in expressing and processing their emotions.

*Performance of fundraising activities*

The fundraising objective for 2021-22 was to raise the funding necessary for delivering in-year activity, build a new financial reserve to provide resilience to any future drops in income, and secure as much funding as possible in advance for 2022-23. We proactively sought to raise income from two specific sources - individual donors and grant funders.

We launched a Friends scheme in the run up to Christmas 2021 for individuals who want to follow our story and support our work. In return for a range of benefits including a regular newsletter, reserved seating and invitations to open rehearsals and an annual concert, we invite our friends to support us through a one off or ideally recurring gift, Gift Aided where possible. However, there is no minimum donation, and parents of choristers and those who sing in the choir are strongly encouraged to become Friends but not under any obligation to give. Further details are available at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/friends. By the end of the year we had nearly 50 Friends, with a total of 80% supporting us financially, and half who had committed to regular monthly giving. The total number of supporters signed up by the end of the year to receive our newsletter was over 90.

We secured grants from five funders in 2021-22. Two raised restricted funds totalling £4,000 and three were unrestricted funding for core-costs totalling £11,500. All funding applications were prepared by the Trustees, with no fees paid to professional fundraisers.

## Financial Review

We ended 2021-22, having covered our operating costs and established a new reserve of £7,000, with an operating surplus of almost £6,000 to carry forward to 2022-23.

We do not charge fees to the children or adults to sing with us, to the schools or communities for whom we deliver singing workshops, or to the hosts for whom we sing. This means that money is never a barrier to people accessing choral music. Instead, we rely on the generosity of our Friends, many of whom give regularly, as well as a growing number of grant funders who recognise the high quality of our music education and the value of our work to promote and sustain the English choral tradition.

Sources of funds in 2021-22 included:

- £3,971 of unrestricted funds transferred to the charity from our predecessor community organisation, raised mainly via a crowdfunding campaign.
- £10,682 carried forward from restricted grants to our predecessor organisation for the Reasons to Sing! Project, including £9,682 from funding awarded in May 2021 by National Lottery funder, Awards for All, and £1,000 awarded in July 2021 by the Worrall Male Voice Choir Grants Foundation.
- £3,000 of restricted grant funding secured from the Sheffield Town Trust to develop our work with our junior choristers.
- £3,000 of core-costs funding secured from the Sheffield Grammar School Exhibition Foundation in December 2021.
- £3,500 of core-costs funding secured from the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust in March 2022.
- £5,000 of core-costs funding secured from the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation in May 2022.
- £1,000 of restricted funding secured from the Worrall Male Voice Choir Grants Foundation in June 2022 to support our education work in schools and communities
- £4,045 from individual donors, including £3,718 from those signing up to the Friends scheme that we launched in the run up to Christmas 2021 to encourage and enable individuals to give, ideally regularly. Eligible Gift Aid on these donations will be claimed and reflected in our 2022-23 accounts.
- £678 in gifts from organisations for whom we sang.

The Trustees have not identified any risks that could create a financial liability not covered by our insurance, and so defined our need for reserves in relation to a proportion of our annual core costs. The Trustees deem it prudent to maintain a reserve equivalent to approximately six months' core costs. For further details see: steelcitychoristers.org.uk/policies.

The charity does not hold any investments.

The Trustees do not currently have any uncertainty about the charity continuing as a going concern. However, the Trustees anticipate a need for increased expenditure to take full advantage of the growing range of post-COVID opportunities available to expand our work. This will require us to not only maintain and grow our income from Friends and other individual donors, but continue to expand the range of grant funders supporting our work.

## Structure, Governance and Management

Steel City Choristers is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Foundation) and governed by a board of Trustees. There are no external persons or bodies entitled to appoint Trustees to the board. All appointments to the board are made by the Trustees on the basis of people's relevant skills and experience.

The charity does not have any employees, but rather engages music professionals on a freelance basis, paying fees for the services they render.

The board of Trustees delegates specific responsibilities to three committees each tasked with leadership in relation to a number of strategic aims:

1. Operations Committee
    - **To Sing:** Provide regular opportunities for choir members to rehearse, receive specialist musical tuition and perform
    - **To Grow**: Recruit new children and adults to sing with us to both grow and diversify our membership and retain those we have
    - **To Safeguard**: Ensure we operate in a safe and lawful manner at all times
2. Partnerships, Projects and Communications Committee
    - **To Reach Out:** Establish relationships with new partners and host communities to diversify those hearing and appreciating our singing
    - **To Innovate:** Design and deliver new and exciting ways to engage schools and children in choral music and present it to audiences who wouldn't otherwise have access to it
    - **To Promote**: Raise public awareness and interest in Steel City Choristers
3. Finance and Governance Committee
    - **To Thrive:** Ensure the sustainability and financial viability of the organisation
    - **To Comply:** Ensure the propriety and efficiency of our organisational governance and reporting

The Trustees and in particular the Chair are advised by the charity's Patrons and Advisors – details of whom are available at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/team/.

The Trustees managing the charity in 2021-22 were:

- Kate Caroe (Chair) – a home educator and founding co-director of OutoftheBox Training, a not-for-profit organisation supporting personal and community wellbeing through the power of story and play.
- Jeremy Dawson (Treasurer) – Professor of health management at the University of Sheffield, Chair of a local orchestra (Hallam Sinfonia), and former Lay Clerk at Sheffield Cathedral.
- Chris Caroe (Secretary) – a civil servant at DfE and former management consultant.
- Tony Laycock - a retired primary school headteacher.
- Yinka Oluwole – a doctor and staff governor at the Sheffield Children's Hospital and Non-Executive Director at Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust.
- Angela Holman – teacher and choir parent (Trustee since April 2022).
- Andrew Watson – former management consultant (Trustee until November 2021).

There are no corporate Trustees.

No Trustees hold title to property belonging to the charity.

There are no funds held as custodian Trustees on behalf of others.

There are no exemptions from disclosure.

The principal risks facing the charity and how these are mitigated are detailed below.

**Recruitment risk: that we are unable to sustain the number of children and adults singing that we need to operate a viable choir.**

Mitigation: We recruit children to sing in the choir without prejudice to their background or prior experience and do not charge fees, so that money is never a barrier to singing with us. We maximise word of mouth and social media opportunities to encourage children to audition to join us, especially in September at the beginning of the school year. Throughout the year, we highlight the opportunity to sing with Steel City Choristers as we deliver singing workshops in schools and community settings. We encourage boys whose voices change to continue singing with us, including through specialist music training during rehearsal time. We recruit experienced adult singers for the lower parts mainly via word of mouth.

**Funding risk: that we are unable to secure the funding we need to sustain our planned activities.**

Mitigation: An annual budget is set having regard to the current funds available. Financial controls ensure all expenditure remains within budget. We maintain a financial reserve that provides the resilience we need to continue core operations over a time period in which significant efforts could be made to secure additional funding, should the need arise. Our reserves policy is published at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/policies.

**Safeguarding risk: that a safeguarding incident occurs despite the policies and procedures in place to keep everyone safe.**

Mitigation: We have a robust safeguarding policy in place that includes the use of trained chaperones for all events involving children, and appropriate checks and training for all adults who are involved with the choir. Our policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually in line with Charity Commission guidance.

**Retention risk: that our Director of Music resigns and that we are faced with the cost, disruption and uncertainty of recruiting a replacement.**

Mitigation: The Chair of Trustees maintains a regular dialogue with the Director of Music in order to build and sustain a positive and collaborative relationship in which both she and the Trustees feel a strong sense of ownership and pride in relation to the operation and future plans for the choir. The Trustees are committed to offering the Director of Music exciting and vibrant opportunities for creative musical expressions and to supporting her ongoing professional development, backed where appropriate with appropriate funding. The Director of Music has agreed to provide us with 3 months' notice of any intention or plan to step down from her role.

STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

# Statement of Financial Activities: Year Ended 31 August 2022

These accounts cover the period from the incorporation of Steel City Choristers as a CIO on 23 September 2021 until the end of our financial year on 31 August 2022.

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total funds |
|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| **Income** | | | |
| Assets from predecessor organisation | 3,971 | 10,682 | 14,653 |
| Donations - Friends | 3,718 | - | 3,718 |
| Donations - Other | 1,006 | - | 1,006 |
| Grants | 11,500 | 4,000 | 15,500 |
| Contributions for charitable donations | - | 913 | 913 |
| Contributions for other goods/services | 612 | - | 612 |
| Miscellaneous | 34 | - | 34 |
| **Total income** | **20,841** | **15,595** | **36,436** |
| **Expenditure** | | | |
| Director of Music fees | 1,788 | 6,294 | 8,082 |
| Other musician fees | 2,084 | 1,911 | 3,995 |
| Director of Music recruitment | 1,073 | - | 1,073 |
| Training | 659 | - | 659 |
| Recordings | - | 2,700 | 2,700 |
| Music purchase | 938 | 22 | 960 |
| Travel | 346 | - | 346 |
| Venue hire | 51 | 602 | 653 |
| Insurance/subscriptions | 383 | - | 383 |
| DBS checks | 13 | - | 13 |
| Web hosting | 85 | - | 85 |
| Printing, postage, promotional materials | 670 | 240 | 910 |
| Clothing & storage boxes | 97 | 640 | 737 |
| Advertising | 110 | 169 | 279 |
| Social events, food & drink, gifts | 1,125 | 16 | 1,141 |
| Charitable donations | - | 913 | 913 |
| **Total expenditure** | **9,422** | **13,507** | **22,929** |
| **Surplus** | **11,419** | **2,088** | **13,507** |
| Balance brought forward from last year | - | - | - |
| **Total funds carried forward** | **11,419** | **2,088** | **13,507** |

## Restricted Funds

There were four sources of restricted funds during the 2021-22 financial year:

- Restricted funds transferred to the charity by our predecessor organisation - an unincorporated community organisation that ran the choir prior to our incorporation as a CIO in September 2022. These funds were from two restricted grants for the Reasons to Sing Project, which ran from May 2021 to May 2022, and were spent in full in the 2021-22 financial year:
    - £9,682 from a grant from National Lottery Awards for All; and
    - £1,000 from a grant from the Worrall Male Voice Choir Grants Foundation.

- A grant from Sheffield Town Trust of £3,000 awarded in October 2021 to widen participation in the choir through the development of our provision for junior choristers. £1,088 remains unspent at the end of the 2021-22 financial year and has to be spent by the end of December 2022.

- A grant from the Worrall Male Voice Choir Grants Foundation in July 2022 of £1,000 to support our education work in schools and communities. None of these funds were spent in the 2021-22 financial year. The grant is due to be spent by July 2023.

- A total of £913 was provided in donations by individuals for the specific purpose of enabling Steel City Choristers to make donations to other charities. These were all made during the 2021-22 financial year.

## Assets and Liabilities

The only assets held by Steel City Choristers are cash (including reserves). These are summarised as follows:

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total funds |
|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Unrestricted cash assets | 4,419 | - | 4,419 |
| Widening participation grant | - | 1,088 | 1,088 |
| School and community work grant | - | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Reserves | 7,000 | - | 7,000 |
| **Total** | **11,419** | **2,088** | **13,507** |

There are no liabilities and no debtors or creditors.

## Payments to Trustees

No payments were made to Trustees in 2021-22 for any work conducted as Trustees or in any other capacity.

A total of £1,680 was paid to four Trustees for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred when these could not be reasonably paid directly from the Steel City Choristers bank account.

## Declarations

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Signature** |  |  |
| **Full Name** | Kate Caroe | Jeremy Dawson |
| **Position** | Chair | Treasurer |
| **Date** | 2 November 2022 | |

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

# Independent examiner's report on the accounts

## Section A Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/directors/ members of**: Steel City Choristers

**On accounts for the year ended**: 31 August 2022

| Charity no.: | 1195909 | Company no.: | |
|---|---|---|---|

**Set out on pages**:

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 August 2022

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act").

I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination, I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that:

- Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- The accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:** Venusia Ltd, Apt 316, Wimbledon Central, 21-33 Worple Road, London - SW19 4BJ, www.venusia.co.uk

**Date:** 18/10/2022

**Name:** Gerald Gurriet

**Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):** Association of International Accountants

**Address:**

Venusia Ltd
Apt 316 Wimbledon Central, 21 – 33 Worple Road
London, SW19 4BJ



CamScanner