



**STEEL CITY CHORISTERS**

## **Trustees' Annual Report**

**For the period**

**1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024**

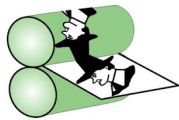


**Charity name: Steel City Choristers**

**Charity number: 1195909**

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

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# 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](https://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 Choristers 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; and
- 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	
<b>Anthems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach - <i>Peace I Leave with You</i></li> <li>• Bruckner - <i>Christus Factus Est</i></li> <li>• Byrd - <i>Sing Joyfully</i></li> <li>• Casals - <i>O Vos Omnes</i></li> <li>• Chilcott - <i>God So Loved the World</i></li> <li>• Daley - <i>Upon your Heart</i></li> <li>• Eccard - <i>When to the Temple Mary Went</i></li> <li>• Elgar - <i>They are at Rest</i> (Clerks)</li> <li>• Gardiner - <i>Evening Hymn</i></li> <li>• Gibbons - <i>Almighty and Everlasting God</i></li> <li>• Gibbons - <i>Drop, Drop Slow Tears</i></li> <li>• Goodall - <i>The Lord's my Shepherd</i></li> <li>• Holst - <i>A Hymne to Christ</i></li> <li>• John IV of Spain - <i>Crux Fidelis</i></li> <li>• Lotti - <i>Crucifixus</i></li> <li>• Mendelssohn - <i>When Jesus our Lord</i></li> <li>• Nardone - <i>I Give you a New Commandment</i></li> <li>• Parry - <i>My Soul, There is a Country</i></li> <li>• Parsley - <i>Lamentations</i> (Clerks)</li> <li>• Purcell - <i>Hear my Prayer</i></li> <li>• Rachmaninov - <i>Bogoroditse Devo</i></li> <li>• Smith-Moore - <i>We Shall Walk</i></li> <li>• Stopford - <i>Do not be Afraid</i></li> <li>• Stopford - <i>In my Father's House</i></li> <li>• Tallis - <i>If Ye Love Me</i></li> <li>• Tallis - <i>Lamentations</i> (Clerks)</li> <li>• Tallis - <i>O Lord, Give Thy Holy Spirit</i></li> <li>• Victoria - <i>O Quam Gloriosum</i></li> <li>• Wesley - <i>Blessed be the God &amp; Father</i></li> <li>• Wood - <i>View me, Lord</i></li> <li>• Wood - <i>Oculi Omnium</i></li> <li>• Victoria - <i>O Quam Gloriosum</i></li> </ul>	<b>Mass settings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lotti - <i>Messa del Primo Tuono</i></li> <li>• Stanford in C and F</li> <li>• Darke in F</li> <li>• Byrd - <i>Mass for Three Voices</i> (Clerks)</li> </ul> <b>Canticles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach - <i>Nunc Dimittis</i></li> <li>• Brewer in D</li> <li>• Byrd - <i>Fauxbourdon Magnificat</i> (Clerks)</li> <li>• Gibbons - <i>Short Service</i></li> <li>• Howells - <i>St Paul's Service</i></li> <li>• Noble in B minor</li> <li>• Rose</li> <li>• Stanford in Bb</li> </ul> <b>Responses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smith</li> <li>• Ayleward</li> <li>• Johnson Manning</li> </ul> <b>Advent and Christmas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beamish - <i>In the Stillness</i></li> <li>• Britten - <i>A Hymn to the Virgin</i></li> <li>• Britten - <i>A New Year Carol</i></li> <li>• Byrd - <i>Ecce Virgo Concipect</i></li> <li>• Cornelius - <i>The Three Kings</i></li> <li>• Darke - <i>In the Bleak Midwinter</i></li> <li>• Gardner - <i>Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing-day</i></li> <li>• Howells - <i>Here is the Little Door</i></li> <li>• Johnson Manning - <i>A Miracle</i></li> <li>• Mathias - <i>Sir Christemas</i></li> <li>• Rutter - <i>Shepherd's Pipe Carol</i></li> </ul> <b>Other</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bach - <i>St Matthew Passion</i></li> <li>• Fauré - <i>Requiem</i></li> </ul>

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	
<b>Arranged by Jeremy Dawson:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Bare Necessities</i> - Terry Gilkyson</li> <li><i>Bohemian Rhapsody</i> - Queen</li> <li><i>Fly me to the Moon</i> - Bart Howard</li> <li><i>Mr Blue Sky</i> - Jeff Lynne</li> <li><i>When Santa got stuck up the Chimney</i> - Billy Moore</li> <li><i>You've got a Friend</i> - Carole King</li> </ul> <b>Arranged by Keith Roberts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>White Christmas</i> - Irving Berlin</li> </ul>	<b>Arranged by Timothy Peters:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Count on Me</i> - Bruno Mars</li> <li><i>Father and Son</i> - Cat Stephens</li> <li><i>God will make a Way</i> - Don Moen</li> <li><i>Hi Ho Silver Lining</i> - English &amp; Weiss</li> <li><i>Mama</i> - Spice Girls</li> <li><i>This is me</i> - Paul &amp; Pasek</li> <li><i>Walking on Sunshine</i> - Katrina &amp; the Waves</li> <li><i>Wonderful World</i> - Thiele &amp; Weiss</li> </ul>

### 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

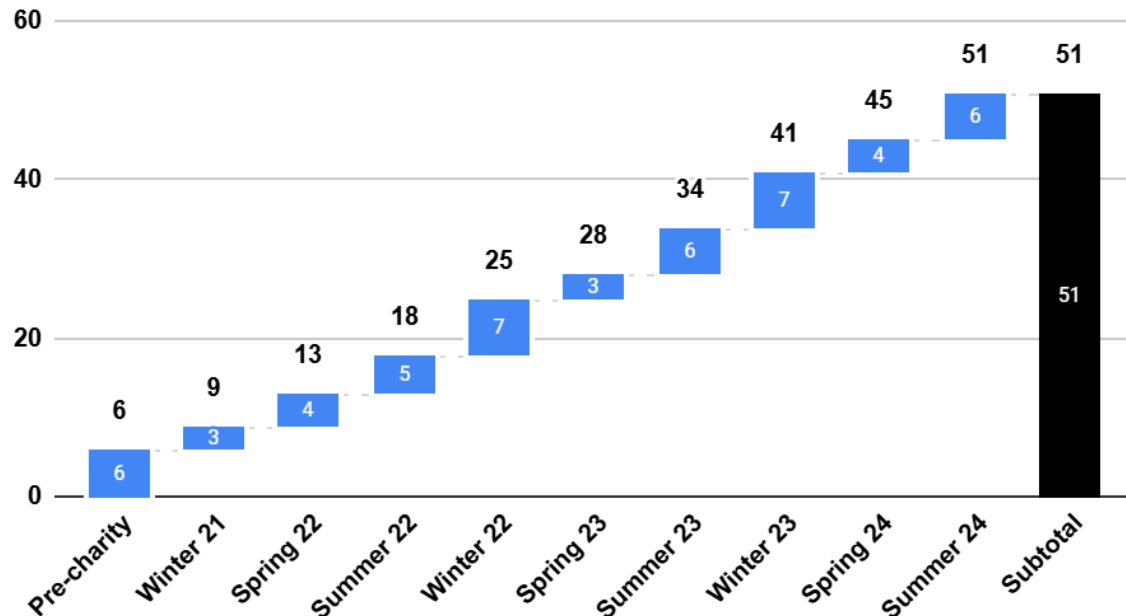
We sang for a total of 30 different host communities in 2023-24. 17 of these were hosts for whom we sang for the first time, bringing the total number of hosts that we have sung for by the end of the year to 51.

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 your 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

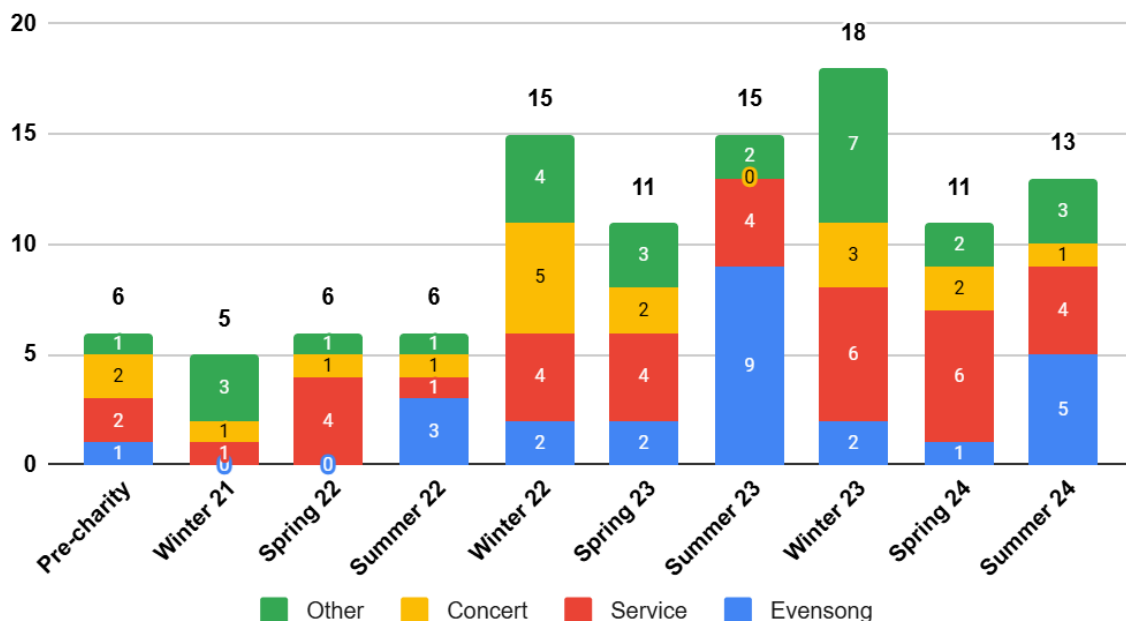
*“Steel City Choristers have enriched many people's lives this year and it has been a blessing to welcome them to sing with us at Epiphany and in Petertide. They offer something unique to Sheffield.”*

### 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	<i>Reasons to Sing!</i> 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.



**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, Ranmoor** 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 Winchester 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.

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

### ***Assets and Liabilities***

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

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

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





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

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 2024

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:

Name:

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

Address:

Date:

08 November 2024

Gerald Gurriet

Association of International Accountants

Venusia Ltd

London, SW19 4BJ

Apt 316 Wimbledon Central, 21 – 33 Worple Road

