



STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

Annual Report

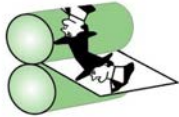
**1 September 2024
to
31 August 2025**



Registered Charity: 1195909

steelcitychoristers.org.uk

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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.

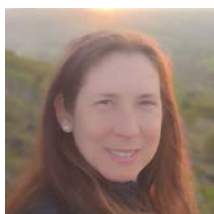
Thank you again for your interest in Steel City Choristers and welcome to our annual report for 2024-25.

- 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



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:

<p>Volunteer risk 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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Recruitment risk That we are unable to sustain the number of children and adults singers that we need to operate a viable choir.</p>	<p>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 <i>Come and Sing Evensong</i> and a <i>Be a Chorister at Christmas</i> 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.</p>
<p>Funding risk That we are unable to secure the funding we need to sustain our work.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Safeguarding risk That a safeguarding incident occurs despite the policies and procedures in place to keep everyone safe.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Retention risk That our Director of Music leaves unexpectedly.</p>	<p>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.</p>

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."

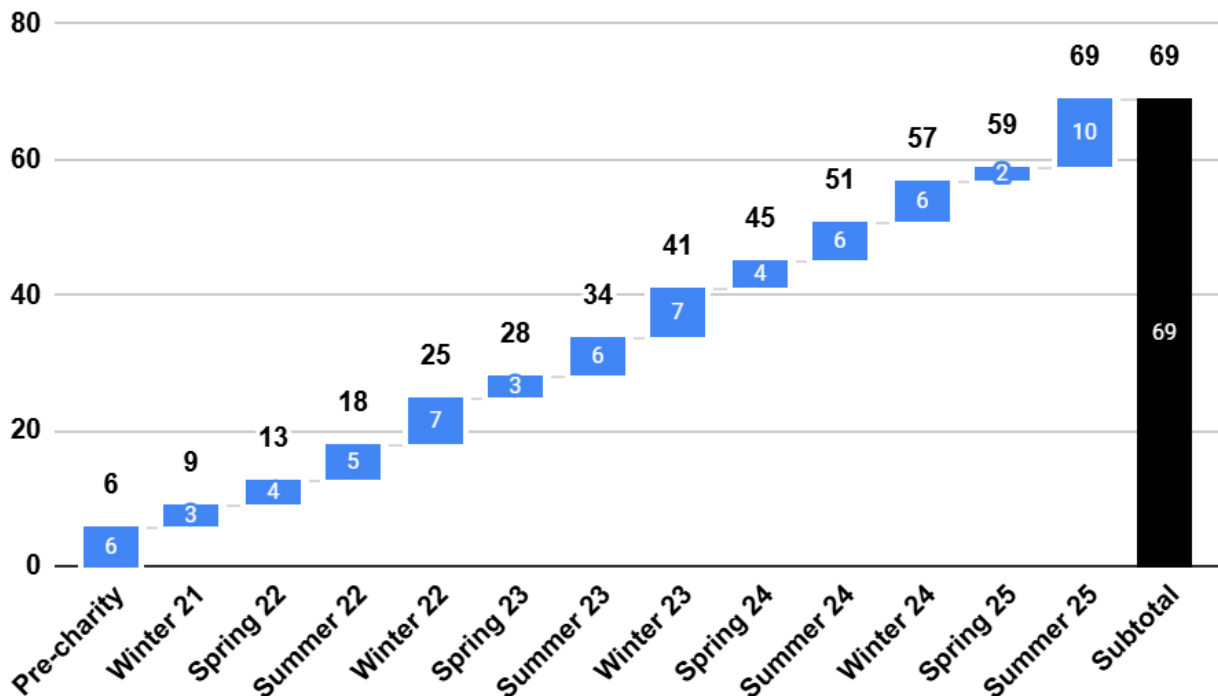
"There's lots of different people in choir - lots of different backgrounds and cultures and differently-abled people. It makes you feel welcome and feel like you fit in. People all go to different schools and it feels like a family."

"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

"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."

Sue Williams, Church Warden, St Swithun's Church, Manor

"I love every performance and applaud the way you care for the choristers, ensuring they learn, enjoy the music and have fun!"

Revd Canon Dr Catherine Okoronkwo, Residentiary Canon and Steward, St Paul's

"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.

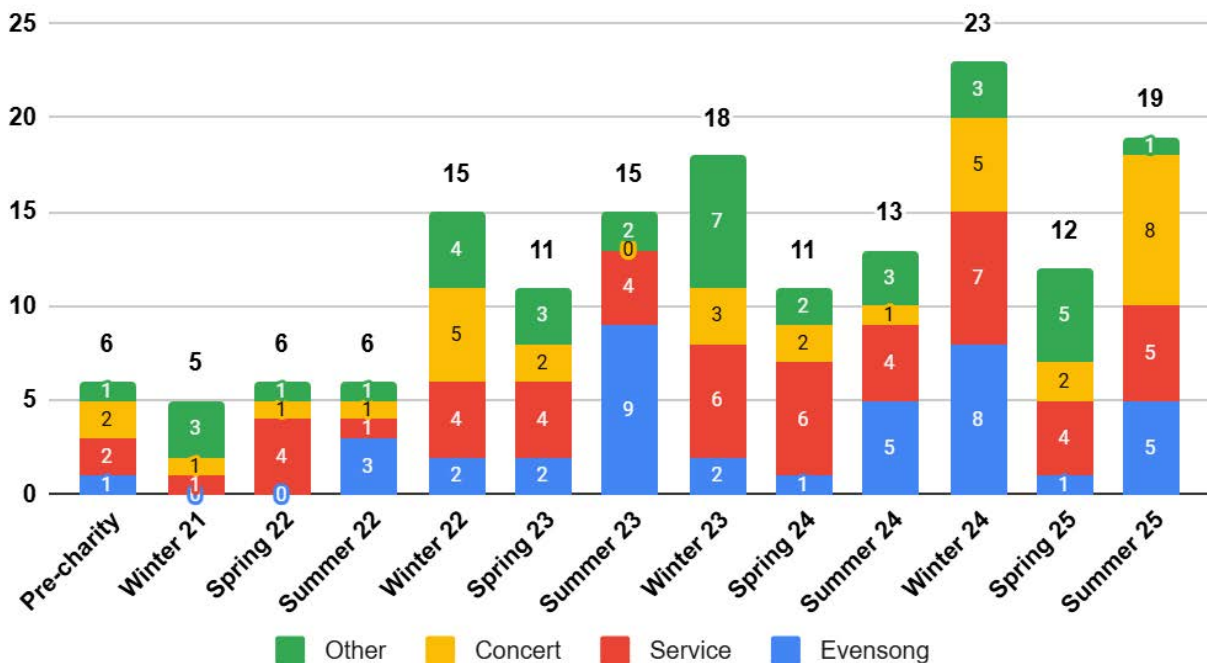
Total singing engagements - 3 year trend

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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bairstow - <i>Blessed City, Heavenly Salem</i> Bairstow - <i>I Sat Down Under his Shadow</i> Briggs - <i>Media Vita</i> Bruckner - <i>Christus Factus Est</i> Bruckner - <i>Locus Iste</i> Bruckner - <i>Os Justi Meditabitur</i> Burton - <i>Rest</i> Byrd - <i>Ave Verum Corpus</i> Byrd - <i>Ne Irascaris Domine</i> Daley - <i>Upon your Heart</i> De Severac - <i>Tantum Ergo</i> Gardiner - <i>Evening Hymn</i> Gibbons - <i>Almighty and Everlasting God</i> Gibbons - <i>Drop, Drop Slow Tears</i> Gjeillo - <i>Ubi Caritas</i> Handl - <i>De coelo veniet</i> Haydn - <i>The Heavens are Telling</i> Holst - <i>A Hymne to Christ</i> John IV of Portugal - <i>Crux Fidelis</i> Jones - <i>Bring us O Lord God</i> Leighton - <i>Solus ad Victimam</i> MacDonald - <i>Crux Fidelis</i> Nardone - <i>I Give you a New Commandment</i> Palestrina - <i>Sicut Cervus</i> Parry - <i>My Soul, There is a Country</i> Parry - <i>There is an Old Belief</i> Paulus - <i>The Road Home</i> Purcell - <i>Thou knowest, Lord</i> 	Mass settings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stanford in C and F Darke in F Byrd - <i>Mass for Three Voices</i> Byrd - <i>Mass for Five Voices</i> Canticles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brewer in D Byrd - <i>Second Service</i> Dyson in D Forbes-L'Estrange - <i>Kings College Service</i> Gibbons - <i>Short Service</i> Howells - <i>St Paul's Service</i> Rose <i>Canticles</i> Wood in D Wood in E flat no. 2 Stanford in C Victoria - <i>Magnificat Sexti Toni</i> Responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayleward Clucas Johnson Manning Rose Tomkins Advent and Christmas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adam - <i>O Holy Night</i> Beamish - <i>In the Stillness</i> Britten - <i>This Little Babe</i> Britten - <i>A New Year Carol</i> Gardner - <i>Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing day</i>



**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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger - <i>Nachtied</i> • Rutter - <i>A Gaelic Blessing</i> • Sanders - <i>The Reproaches</i> • Schumann - <i>Abendfeier in Venedig</i> • Smith-Moore - <i>We Shall Walk</i> • Stainer - <i>I saw the Lord</i> • Stopford - <i>In my Father's House</i> • Victoria - <i>O Quam Gloriosum</i> • Wesley - <i>Blessed be the God & Father</i> • Wood - <i>O Thou the Central Orb</i> <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bach - St Matthew Passion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head - <i>The Little Road to Bethlehem</i> • Howells - <i>A Spotless Rose</i> • arr. Humphris - <i>The 12 Days of Christmas</i> • Mathias - <i>A Babe is Born</i> • Ord - <i>Adam Lay Ybounden</i> • Perinpanayagam - <i>In Bethlehem Above</i> • Sweelinck - <i>Hodie Christus Natus Est</i> • Tchaikovsky - <i>The Crown of Roses</i> • Warlock - <i>Bethlehem Down</i> • Warlock - <i>Balulalow</i> • Weir - <i>Drop down ye heavens</i> • Wilberg - <i>Ding dong! Merrily on high</i>
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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

<p>Arranged by Jeremy Dawson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bare Necessities</i> - Terry Gilkyson • <i>Fly me to the Moon</i> - Bart Howard • <i>You've got a Friend</i> - Carole King 	<p>Arranged by Timothy Peters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hi Ho Silver Lining</i> - English & Weiss • <i>This is me</i> - Paul & Pasek • <i>Wonderful World</i> - Thiele & Weiss
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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 Minster. 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.

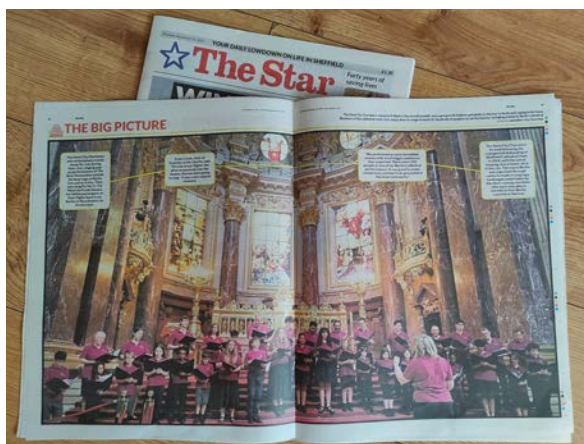
Communications

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 Oct 24 £	London Apr 25 £	Berlin Aug 25 £	TOTAL £
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.



My name is:

I can help Steel City Choristers share the joy of choral music by:

- ☐ Receiving an email newsletter
- ☐ Giving a one-off gift
- ☐ Making regular donations
- ☐ Recommending a funder or sponsor
- ☐ Volunteering or giving in-kind support

Please tell me more by:

Email:

Phone:

We will store and use your data in line with our Privacy Notice.

Please hand us this card, post it to 2 The Grove, Sheffield, S17 4AS or email us at friends@steelcitychoristers.org.uk

"Steel City Choristers is 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!" Rev Jay French

To find out more, follow us on social media, or donate now, please visit:

linktr.ee/steelcitychoristers



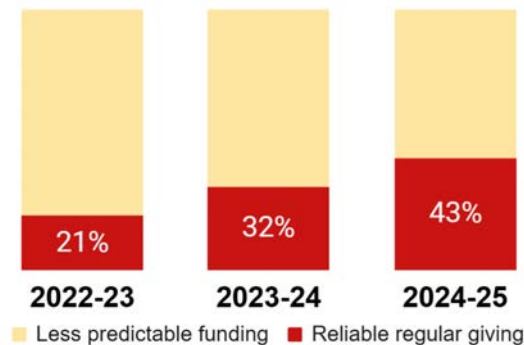
Many of our supporters give every month to help us share the joy of choral music.



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
<i>of which:</i>				
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:

Name:

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

Address:



Gerald Gurrer

Association of Independent Accountants

Venusia Ltd

London, SW19 4BJ

Apt 316 Wimbledon Central, 21 – 33 Worple Road

Date:

01 November 2025





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
Miscellaneous	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
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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

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	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

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
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 liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

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

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval



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.:

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Signed:

Name:

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

Address:

Date:

01 November 2025

Gerald Gurriet

Association of International Accountants

Venusia Ltd

London, SW19 4BJ

Apt 316 Wimbledon Central, 21 – 33 Worple Road