



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From **1 September 2023** To **31 August 2024**

Charity name: Stafford Sinfonia

Charity registration number: 1196465

Objectives and Activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	THE OBJECT OF THE CIO IS TO ADVANCE, IMPROVE, DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN PUBLIC EDUCATION IN, AND APPRECIATION OF, THE ART AND SCIENCE OF MUSIC IN ALL ITS ASPECTS BY ANY MEANS THE TRUSTEES SEE FIT, INCLUDING THROUGH THE PRESENTATION OF PUBLIC CONCERTS AND RECITALS.
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	Five public concerts of orchestral music held on Staffordshire: Mahler's Fourth Symphony, Christmas Concert, "Great Romantics", "Out of the Darkness", Summer Concert in Eccleshall.
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	The trustees have regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

	SORP reference	
Policy on grant making	Para 1.38	Stafford Sinfonia does not make grants.
Policy on social investment including program related investment	Para 1.38	Stafford Sinfonia does not make social investments.
		Stafford Sinfonia is supported by volunteers other than its trustees. Ten

Contribution made by volunteers	Para 1.38	individuals volunteered their time to support Stafford Sinfonia during the reporting period, undertaking tasks such as preparing refreshments at concert intervals, publicising concerts and assisting with box office duties at events.
Other		N/A

Achievements and Performance

	SORP reference	
Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	<p>Stafford Sinfonia continues to make significant progress against its aims and objectives, namely to provide playing opportunities for people in Staffordshire and to present high-quality non-professional classical music events in the region. Before 2019, Sinfonia presented three concerts per season averaging around 350 audience members between the three performances; in 2023-24, the orchestra presented five concerts to a combined audience of c730, more than double our audiences of five years ago, and a 4% increase on 2022-23. We have continued our relationship with Eccleshall's Holy Trinity Church and presented our second Christmas concert in partnership with St John's Church in Stafford. In 2023-24, Stafford Sinfonia presented 5 concerts:</p> <p>Mahler's Fourth Symphony Audience c. 200</p> <p>Christmas Concert Audience c. 150</p> <p>"Great Romantics" Audience c. 150</p> <p>"Out of the Darkness" Audience c. 150</p> <p>Summer Concert in Eccleshall Audience c. 80</p> <p>Total audience: c.730 (2022-23 c.700)</p> <p>The artistic quality of the orchestra has continued to rise, driven by ambitious repertoire selection, member dedication and recruitment of high-quality musicians to its ranks. Music Director Jack Lovell-Huckle (CBSO Assistant Conductor, Music Director Spires Music) led all our projects this season. We have begun a new programme of inviting esteemed professionals from top-level orchestras including the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, English</p>

		<p>Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra of The Swan to coach our members in sectionals. In 2023-24, our winds and brass musicians were coached by Oboist and Cor Anglais player Louise Braithewaite (Orchestra of the Swan, Principal; The Royal Shakespeare Company; City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra & English Symphony Orchestra guest) and the strings worked with CBSO cellist Helen Edgar.</p> <p>In November 2023, soprano Emily Chapman performed works including Mahler's Fourth Symphony. A young artist building a formidable reputation, Emily is the daughter of a member of Stafford Sinfonia and wowed our audiences with her clear and expressive performance. In March, cellist (and Artistic Director of English Symphony Orchestra, Elgar Festival and Colorado MahlerFest) Kenneth Woods performed Schumann's Cello Concerto, supported by Tim Toft Violins. And rising star pianist Bocheng Wang joined Stafford Sinfonia in June to perform Grieg's Piano Concerto, generously supported by Making Music's Philip and Dorothy Green Young Artists Programme. In our Christmas Concert, we performed the world premiere of local composer Aaron Samuel's suite "Sylvan Winter Suite". Orchestrated especially for Stafford Sinfonia, Aaron is a Stafford resident and introduced his new work to a large appreciative audience as part of our burgeoning relationship with St John's Church.</p> <p>For the first time, we have been surveying audiences to our events. Audience feedback from Stafford Sinfonia concerts this season highlights a strong appreciation for the high-quality performances, varied and engaging music programs, and the intimate atmosphere of venues like Rising Brook Church. Attendees particularly enjoyed pieces featuring soloists and praised the conductor's interaction with the audience, especially when educating them about the music. Overall, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many attendees expressing their intent to return for future performances.</p> <p>The orchestra continued to grow its membership, and now has no vacancies to fill in its core membership but continues to welcome violinists and violas.</p> <p>2023-24 is the first full season using our new website (launched April 2023). Engagement online has increased</p>
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		<p>significantly, with over 2500 site visitors and more than 4500 site sessions. Using the 'pay what you feel' functionality, we saw increased ticket revenue online, with over 70% of tickets now bought through the website.</p> <p>Financially, overall income was up 34% compared with 2022-23 (largely accounted for by increased ticket sales and increasing the number of member musicians), and expenditure only increased by 25% on 2022-23. This resulted in a surplus of £2,481.26 for the year (2022-23: £1,152.20). This surplus will be invested in a "Play Day" with professional sectional tutors from the English Symphony Orchestra (7 September 2024) and high-quality soloists in future seasons and mitigating uncertain cost inflation such as venue hire which has increased significantly due to rising utility costs for the venues Sinfonia uses.</p> <p>In the 2024-25 season, the orchestra plans to hold a "Play Day" exploring Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony, coached by professional tutors from the English Symphony Orchestra, a professional orchestra based in the English regions. Three programmes with four concerts are planned: November 2024 (Brahms' Second Symphony, Rossini William Tell Overture and Weber Clarinet Concerto No 1 - soloist Nathan Issac), March 2024 (Mozart Sinfonia Concertante for Violin, Viola and Orchestra - soloists CBSO Leader Eugene Tzikindelean & CBSO viola David Bamung, Schubert Symphony No. 9 "The Great") and June 2024 (Rossini Overture to The Turk in Italy, Mozart "Turkish" Violin Concerto No. 5 - soloist ESO Principal Artist & Leader/ BBC Philharmonic Leader Zoë Beyers), Haydn Symphony No.100). We plan to repeat the concert in June at Eccleshall Holy Trinity Church.</p>
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Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Achievements against objectives set	Para 1.41	The Trustees budgeted for a modest surplus in 2023-24. This has been achieved.
Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set	Para 1.41	Stafford Sinfonia continued its recruitment campaign for playing members and achieved sponsorship via Tim Toft Violins.

Investment performance against objectives	Para 1.41	Stafford Sinfonia does not make investments.
Other		N/A

Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	Stafford Sinfonia is in a good financial position, with sufficient reserves and an operating surplus of £2,481.26 for the period.
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	Stafford Sinfonia holds reserves to cover the costs associated with a need to cancel activity at short notice as happened in the COVID-19 pandemic. The Trustees have determined reserves should be set at 2 concerts' worth of lost income: £1,800.
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	£2110.36
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	N/A
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	N/A
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	The trustees are satisfied that Stafford Sinfonia is a going concern, with sufficient operational funds and reserves to plan and deliver future activity.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	Earned income: concert tickets, programme sales and programme advertising. Donations: member musicians and Friends of Stafford Sinfonia
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	Para 1.46	Stafford Sinfonia does not make investments.
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	The main risk to the charity is an inability to give concerts, or to hold rehearsals, as happened in the COVID-19 pandemic. The trustees consider this a medium risk and monitor the situation carefully.

		<p>A low risk is that the Music Director may resign from Stafford Sinfonia. Such a situation may lead to a fall in playing standards. The Music Director has occasionally been unavailable for rehearsals but a suitable deputy has been engaged (as happened in summer 2023, when a very high quality deputy was sourced in Melvin Tay).</p> <p>A low risk is that of losing key musician members, for example the leader or wind principals. During the absence of activity due to COVID-19, some musicians decided not to re-join Sinfonia on its return. Sinfonia has now recruited excellent musicians to all positions and has implemented a deputy list where, should a musician need to be absent or resigns their position, deputy musicians of a high standard are ready to join the orchestra. This deputies scheme has been very successful, allowing Stafford Sinfonia to programme for larger forces than its membership on occasion, as is planned for the concert of Mahler's Fourth Symphony in the 2023-24 season.</p>
Other		N/A

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document (trust deed , royal charter)	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g. unincorporated association , CIO)	Para 1.25	CIO
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	<p>As described in article 13 of Stafford Sinfonia's constitution ("Appointment of Charity Trustees"):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> At every annual general meeting of the members of the CIO, one-third of the charity trustees shall retire from office. If the number of charity trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third shall retire from office, but if there is only one charity trustee, he or she shall retire; The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last

		<p>appointment or reappointment. If any trustees were last appointed or reappointed on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot;</p> <p>c. The vacancies so arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the annual general meeting; any vacancies not filled at the annual general meeting may be filled as provided in sub-clause (e) of this clause;</p> <p>d. The members or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed in accordance with clause 15 (Retirement and removal of charity trustees), or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit specified in clause 12(c) (Charity trustees) on the number of charity trustees would not as a result be exceeded;</p> <p>e. A person so appointed by the members of the CIO shall retire in accordance with the provisions of sub-clauses (b) and (c) of this clause. A person so appointed by the charity trustees shall retire at the conclusion of the next annual general meeting after the date of his or her appointment, and shall not be counted for the purpose of determining which of the charity trustees is to retire by rotation at that meeting.</p>
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Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees	Para 1.51	Trustees must read Stafford Sinfonia's constitution and affirm they are legally permitted to act as a trustee of Stafford Sinfonia.
The charity's organisational structure and any wider	Para 1.51	The members of Stafford Sinfonia appoint the trustees. The trustees appoint the Music Director. The members also appoint among themselves officers as desired, including publicity officer and librarian.

network with which the charity works		
Relationship with any related parties	Para 1.51	The chair of Stafford Sinfonia is married to the Music Director, who is a paid freelancer who provides conducting services to the CIO. The chair is not permitted to be present when discussing the Music Director's contract, including whether the Music Director's contract may be extended, the fees and expenses due to the Music Director or whether to terminate the Music Director's contract.
Other		N/A

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Stafford Sinfonia
Other name the charity uses	
Registered charity number	1196465
Charity's principal address	22 Copeland Drive Stone ST15 8YP

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Sebastian Lovell-Huckle	Chair	Whole year	N/A
2	Simon Coombs	Secretary	Whole year	N/A
3	Kerensa Guest	Treasurer	Whole year	N/A

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

Description of the assets held in this capacity	Stafford Sinfonia does not hold funds on behalf of others.
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	Stafford Sinfonia does not hold funds on behalf of others.
Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	Stafford Sinfonia does not hold funds on behalf of others.

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Jack Lovell-Huckle: Music Director

Exemptions from disclosure

Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details

N/A

Other optional information

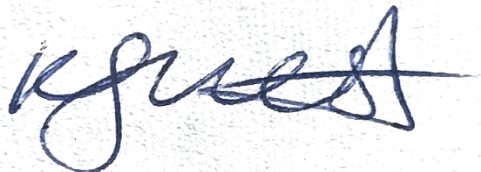
N/A

Declarations

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)



Full name(s)

Sebastian Lovell-Huckle

Kerensa Guest

Position (eg Secretary,
Chair, etc)

Chair

Treasurer

Date

30 November 2024

Stafford Sinfonia Accounts 2023/2024

(Accounts 2022/2023)

Money In	Subs	£4,543.00	£3,585.50
	Door (inc programmes)	£7,505.59	£5,366.10
	Advertising Revenue	£775.00	£655.00
	Friends of the Sinfonia	£190.00	£100.00
	Social Events	£0.00	£0.00
	Subsidiaries	£225.00	n/a
	Donations	£174.56	£258.65
	Total Money In	£13,413.15	£9,965.25

Money Out	Hire of Tillington School	£1,191.00	£1,120.00
	MD's fees	£3,600.00	£3,400.00
	Making Music Membership	£181.00	£186.00
	Publicity	£143.74	£173.94
	Hire of Venues	£1,625.00	£1,575.00
	Payments to Players	£1,753.49	£780.00
	Refreshments	£47.62	£26.65
	Programme Printing	£285.05	£135.44
	SumUp/Website Fees	£270.43	£372.52
	Social Events	£0.00	£0.00
	Ticket Revenue Share	£1,153.00	£1,025.00
	Misc	£681.56	£18.50
	Total Money Out	£10,931.89	£8,813.05

Opening Bank Balance 01/09/23	£4,019.07	£2,866.87
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Closing Bank Balance 31/08/24	£6,500.33	£4,019.07
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Surplus for Year	£2,481.26	£1,152.20
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Business Saver Account Balance	£2,110.36	£2,068.88
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