

# **Winchester Community Choir**

**Registered Charity Number 1198281**

## **Trustees Annual Report and Accounts**

**for the period from 1 March 2023 to 29 February 2024**

# Winchester Community Choir

a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England

Trustees Annual Report for the period from 1 March 2023 to 29 February 2024

<b>Charity's name:</b>	Winchester Community Choir
<b>Charity registration number:</b>	1198281
<b>Registered office address:</b>	16 Peninsula Square, Winchester, SO23 8GJ
<b>Email address:</b>	<a href="mailto:membership@winchestercommunitychoir.com">membership@winchestercommunitychoir.com</a>
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="https://www.winchestercommunitychoir.com">https://www.winchestercommunitychoir.com</a>
<b>Independent Examiner of Accounts:</b>	Christopher Napier, Chartered Accountant
<b>Bankers:</b>	Lloyds Bank plc., 49 High Street, Winchester, SO23 9BU

## Committee Members serving during the year:

The following trustees were appointed when the charity was registered on 17 March 2022, by agreement of members at special general meetings on 22 January 2022 and 8 March 2022. Two trustees retired at the Annual General Meeting on 6 June 2023 and were re-elected, as permitted by the constitution.

Jim Benson	Trustee from 09-Jun-2023
Christel Buis	Committee Member from 18-Jul-2023
Hazel Chenhall	Trustee from 17-Mar-2022
David d'Arcy Hughes	Trustee from 17-Mar-2022
Annette Gibson	Trustee from 17-Mar-2022, re-elected 06-Jun-2023
Denis Gibson	Trustee from 17-Mar-2022, re-elected 06-Jun-2023
Paul Montgomery	Trustee from 17-Mar-2022
Wenda Moroney	Trustee from 17-Mar-2022

The following trustees served as officers of the charity:

David d'Arcy Hughes	Chair from 07-Jun-2022
Paul Montgomery	Secretary, from 17-Mar-2022
Wenda Moroney	Treasurer, from 17-Mar-2022

In attendance	
Carolyn Robson	Music Director

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## Chair's Foreword

Winchester Community Choir experienced the full rollercoaster of life this reporting period in that a highly successful year which affirmed the choir's choral and financial recovery from the lockdown years was brought to something of a juddering halt, albeit temporarily, by the news that our iconic Musical Director, Carolyn Robson, had suffered a near-fatal stroke in mid-February. The good news is that Carolyn made a miraculous recovery and will, in due course, be able to resume her roles including, we trust, that of our Music Director. After a nervous interlude we were most fortunate to secure the services of another renowned local musical director, Zack Stephens, to step into Carolyn's shoes and the show was able to go on with only one cancelled rehearsal.

As will be seen from the **Activities and Achievements** section of this Report the choir was engaged in a number of varied events throughout the year including two highly successful concerts, appearances at the Winchester Christmas Market and care homes singing carols, and two especially memorable events, 'Singing with Owls' at the Hawk Conservancy and the Sarah Morgan Memorial Concert at the Theatre Royal Winchester, jointly with five other local choirs. The choir being dive-bombed by eagle-owls was not something I ever expected to see and the Sarah Morgan concert, masterminded by Carolyn Robson with huge input from our own Denis Gibson, was a truly special event showcasing the wealth and breadth of the local choral community of which we form part.

We continue to deliver on our charitable purposes by providing opportunities for the local community to engage in and attend choral activities and raising substantial funds for local deserving causes. Testament to this is the high proportion of choir members who attend our weekly rehearsals and the fact that our concerts tend to be sold out. We are regularly requested to perform at weddings, anniversary celebrations and the like and we accommodate such requests where we can. Our choir numbers continue to rise and are approaching 90. Our financial position is secure.

Maintaining an up-to-date website, providing current sound files of our complete repertoire of songs, preparing a weekly newsletter, handling accounts and subscriptions, observing our charitable obligations and organizing social events are just a few of the tasks involved in enabling our choir to flourish. These tasks fall to the members of the Committee listed at the top of this Report and I cannot thank them enough for the cheerful and efficient way they fulfil these duties. Thanks also to the increasing number of choir members (and sometimes their partners) who volunteer to steward at rehearsals and performances, organise our social events and set-up our concerts. As a result, I can report that the choir is in good heart and sound health and looking forward to another active and enjoyable year of music making.

**David d'Arcy Hughes, Chair of Trustees**

## Governance

The choir is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and choir members are voting members of the charity.

Winchester Community Choir has a committee comprising the trustees and others in attendance, like the choir's Music Director and any co-opted committee members. The committee is responsible for administering the business of the choir, including arrangements for rehearsals and performances, and the award of grants from moneys raised by the choir's fundraising activities. There are three formal officers of the charity appointed by its members: the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Other committee members may be appointed by the committee to perform additional roles, for example the Membership Secretary. The committee met six times during the year.

As required by its constitution, Winchester Community Choir held an Annual General Meeting during the reporting period. The AGM took place on 6 June 2023.

The charity's governing document is a constitution for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation - the association model. The trustees are elected by the members of the charity or appointed by the trustees under clause 13(4) of the constitution.

Winchester Community Choir does not have corporate trustees. It does not own or lease property. It does not act as a custodian of the resources of any other charity.

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## Objectives

Winchester Community Choir has two charitable purposes. The objectives are:

- (1) the advancement of the arts, and in particular the art of choral singing, by providing an accessible community choir for people in Winchester and its surrounding area, by presenting concerts and in such other ways as the choir through its Trustees shall determine from time-to-time.
- (2) the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage by raising funds for other charities, nominated by our members and approved by our Trustees.

## Delivering public benefit

The trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. They declare that

- (1) Any member of the public may join Winchester Community Choir. We do not audition. We offer members opportunities to develop their skills as singers and to maintain their health and wellbeing through participation in community activity.
- (2) Our fundraising at public concerts benefits other charities, usually local charities committed to helping people in need because of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage. We give grants to charities nominated by our members and approved by our committee. Since the choir started in 2005, we have made 70 grants totalling more than £45,000.

## Activities and Achievements

Our rehearsals in the summer term 2023 were a preparation for our July concert, *Hampshire and Beyond*. As the concert title suggests there were songs with a Hampshire connection, from inside the country and from our immediate Wessex neighbours - some quintessentially English songs by Vaughan Williams, Orlando Gibbons, Sarah Morgan and Paul Sartin. 'Beyond' took us far away to the United States. It was Independence Day, after all. So, we sang some shanties and blues from North America, and an Elvis favourite from Blue Hawaii. Our chosen charity to benefit from this fundraising event was the Southampton & Winchester Visitors Group – a local organisation that supports refugees and asylum seekers.

Our summer concert coincided with the implementation of Winchester City Council's decision to charge for evening parking in city centre car parks. Over the following months, the choir committee attempted to persuade the Council that this would adversely affect Winchester's cultural life and night-time economy. The Chair and Membership Secretary presented a petition to a Council meeting at the end of November 2023 objecting to these charges. Our efforts (and representations from other organisations in the city) led to some minor changes but choir members who travel to rehearsal by car and for whatever reason do not use free evening parking on the fringes of the city are still faced with a significantly bigger parking bill (at least £60 over a 12-month period).

In the autumn 2023 we set up an Events Team under the leadership of Hazel Chenhall to manage the increasing number of social and other events on the choir calendar.

December was a busy month. Winchester Community Choir was on the performance stage at the Christmas Market 2023. More accurately we were arranged around the stage because we could not all fit on it. Amongst many other things, the choir sang *In the bleak midwinter* - a carol from its Christmas repertoire and an apt description of the chilly weather conditions in the Cathedral's Inner Close.

We presented our Christmas Concert, *brr*, on Tuesday 5 December. It was such an enjoyable occasion. We kicked off with an old favourite from Hampshire - the rousing *Rejoice mankind and sing*. Then a couple of bluesy numbers before a carol, *Masters in this hall*. written by William Morris, a man more famous now for his wallpaper than his poetry. After some interval refreshments we returned with *The wonderful sucking pig* (a song of lies and marvels) and *Beautiful star of Bethlehem* by R Fisher Boyce, a farmer with 11 children who found peace and quiet on his milking stool to write this one.

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We've gone carolling in local nursing and care homes in recent years and on 17 December we made a return visit to Flowerdown Care Home in Harestock. Many thanks to Cath Hart who led the singing. Normally there are two homes on our itinerary, but an outbreak of Norovirus amongst residents at our second venue put paid to that.

The Hawk Conservancy Trust is a charity with a mission to conserve birds of prey and their habitats. The Trust's annual *Christmas Carols and Owls by Moonlight* is one of the Trust's most popular and important fundraising events of the year. On 19 December, Winchester Community Choir sang carols in the open air alongside the Trust's free-flying owls in the moonlight in front of an audience of 300 people. Tom Morath from The Hawk Conservancy wrote, 'We have the most beautiful backdrop to this show in one of our three flying arenas at the Trust. It really was magical.' Indeed it was!

The beginning of Spring Term 2024 was a series of intense rehearsals for a concert at the Theatre Royal Winchester on Sunday 4 February, presented by the Sarah Morgan Foundation. The concert, titled *Rivers & Roads*, celebrated the lives and work of two Hampshire musicians, Sarah Morgan and Paul Sartin. Sarah Morgan founded Winchester Community Choir in 2005. She died in 2013 and the Foundation set up to continue her work marked (a little late) the tenth anniversary of her death. Six Hampshire choirs, including Winchester Community Choir, performed at the event, and many members of our choir and their partners were involved in organising the production. The Theatre Royal was packed with 200 singers and another 200 paying audience and was a very successful event.

We were at the launch event for *Sound Winchester* at The Arc on Saturday 17 February. *Sound Winchester* is a festival of community music making, due to happen in the city in June. The launch event was part of the build-up for the festival and was intended to introduce the Winchester community to the varied musical opportunities and talent on their doorstep.

Mid-February came with a shock. Our Music Director, Carolyn Robson, fell seriously ill and could not lead our rehearsals in the second half of the Spring Term. We are delighted that she is making a good recovery, and we hope to see her again in May when our summer term kicks off. Zack Stephens has filled the gap at short notice and continues to prepare us for our Summer Concert, to take place on Tuesday 9 July 2024.

## Fundraising and grants

The choir's fundraising usually involves two concerts each year with retiring collections in aid of named charities. Grants made as a result of our fundraising efforts are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1** Summary of grants to charities

Year	Charity	Type of charity	Grant	Total
Total brought forward from previous years				£43,146
2023	Southampton & Winchester Visitors Group	Support for refugees	£1,000	
2023	Winchester Beacon	Support for people experiencing homelessness or vulnerability	£950	
2023	Princess Royal Trust for Carers	Support for Carers	£90	
Total grants awarded in 2023/24				£2,040
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>£45,186</b>

Here is the detail:

- (1) Our summer concert was a fundraiser for the Southampton & Winchester Visitors Group – a local organisation that supports refugees and asylum seekers. A retiring collection made £670. Through the generosity of our audience and a top-up contribution from ticket sales, the choir was able to make a grant of £1,000 to the charity;

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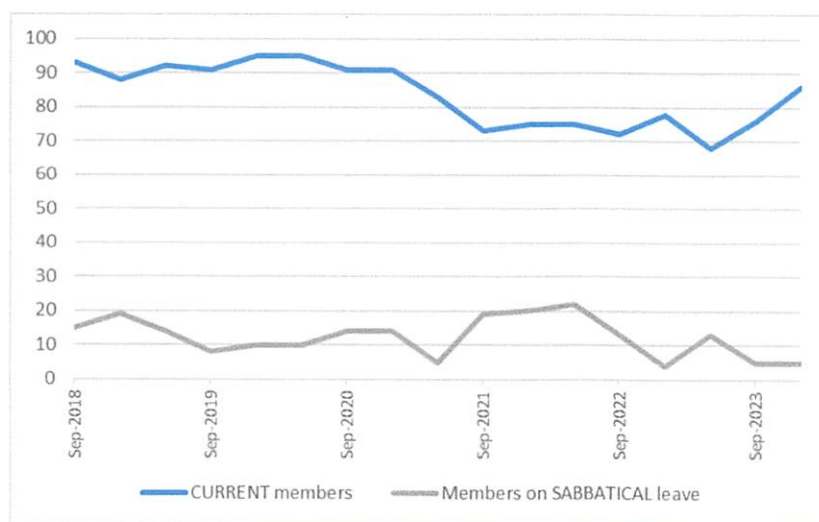
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- (2) At our Christmas concert a generous audience donated £538 in a retiring collection. It went to our chosen charity - Winchester Beacon that supports homeless people in Winchester. We added a share of ticket sales so that our total grant to the charity is £950. Michele Price at Winchester Beacon emailed to say, 'Wow, that is just amazing. What a tremendous feat and very many thanks to the whole choir for choosing us as their charity to support this year. Please pass on huge thanks to each and every one.'
- (3) And an extra grant of £90 was made to The Princess Royal Trust, in lieu of a birthday gift to Jean Forster. Jean and her late husband, Jim, were founder members of the choir. Rather than a personal gift from the choir to mark her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, Jean asked the choir committee to make a donation to the Princess Royal Trust for Carers in Hampshire.

## Membership

Choir membership has made a good recovery post-COVID. We were delighted to welcome new members who started with us in during 2023/24. At the end of our financial year, our choir numbered 89 members – more or less on target in the plan we made when preparing our application to become a registered charity. We are gradually working our way back to the membership level we had pre-pandemic.

**Figure 1** Membership statistics – Sep-2018 to Jan-2024



### Note

The chart shows numbers at the beginning of each term in September, January and May.

## Financial review

The trustees have prepared Receipts and Payments Accounts for the period from 1 March 2023 to 29 February 2024. See pages 8-9. We have used the Charity Commission's optional Form CC16a as a checklist, omitting columns and sections that do not apply to us.

The trustees have reviewed the charity's financial position at the end of the period and wish to highlight the following:

- (1) All receipts, payments and cash funds are unrestricted.
- (2) We have no endowment funds. There were no asset and investment sales or purchases in the accounting period. We have no other monetary assets, no investment assets and no assets retained for the charity's own use.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Assets retained for the charity's own use' would include land and buildings, motor vehicles, office and any specialised equipment, and shares in a charity's non-charitable company. We have none.

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- (3) The accounts show a surplus of receipts over payments of £1,727 for the period.
- (4) The method of collecting membership subscriptions changed in January 2023 - from collection monthly by Standing Order, to collection at the beginning of each term by Direct debit. As a consequence, last year's accounts reported the receipt of 13½ months of membership subscriptions (17 March 2022 to 30 April 2023). This year's accounts report membership receipts for a 12-month period only. Therefore, this year's and last year's figures for membership subscriptions are not a like-for-like comparison.
- (5) We pay for Music Director fees termly in arrears and for hire of premises monthly in arrears. These liabilities not paid in the accounting period, amount to £1,781 and are due to be paid at the end of March 2024.
- (6) The trustees planned to build the charity's reserves during 2023/24 so that cash funds are at least £4,500 at the beginning of each term (i.e. at the end of the month in May, September and January, when termly membership subscriptions have been received). The trustees believe that would be sufficient to cover the liabilities arising in any academic term. Reserves at the end of 2023-24 amount to £4,065 (= net cash funds of £5,846 less liabilities of £1,781) and, it is estimated, will exceed £4,500 at the end of May 2024 once summer term membership subscriptions are received.

The trustees are of the opinion that Winchester Community Choir is a going concern.

The principal risks facing the charity are not directly of a financial nature but would have financial consequences were they to materialise. The risks are:

- (1) the recruitment and retention of choir members. Recruitment is on-track but there is a risk that membership will not increase at the rate we hope and plan for in 2024/25. On the positive side, even with a cautious projection of membership numbers next year, we anticipate a financial surplus which will enable us to rebuild our reserves;
- (2) the availability of volunteers to administer the business of the charity.
- (3) the availability of skilled and qualified music director(s) and locums to ensure that rehearsals are always held, and the choir properly prepared for concert performances.

The choir has not received donations of a suspicious nature during this reporting period.

The charity's main expenditure items are:

- (1) Music Director fees and venue hire for rehearsals and performances which account for 73% of expenditure. This expenditure directly supports our first objective - the advancement of the arts, and in particular the art of choral singing, by providing an accessible community choir.
- (2) Grants to other charities which accounts for 15% of expenditure. This expenditure directly supports our second objective - the relief of those in need.
- (3) 6% of payments cover social events in the choir's calendar, which are recharged to members (e.g. booking deposits for supper at The Stables following a performance at Winchester Christmas Market).
- (4) The remaining 6% of payments are for administrative services that support the choir and its activities. This expenditure includes finance charges for processing membership subscriptions and ticket sales, public liability insurance, printing and stationery, website expenses, gifts and presentations.

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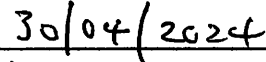
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The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records and for preparing financial statements which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011. The trustees are not obliged by law to commission an independent examination of the accounts, but they believe it is a good way of assuring choir members and the Charity Commission that Winchester Community Choir is well run and that its financial affairs are transparent. The trustees are grateful to Christopher Napier for volunteering to be our independent examiner. His report is on page 10.

**This Trustees Annual Report was approved by the Trustees and is signed on their behalf by:**



David dArcy Hughes  
Chair of the Trustees



Date



# Winchester Community Choir

a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England (No.1198281)

## Receipts and Payments Account for the period from 1 March 2023 to 29 February 2024

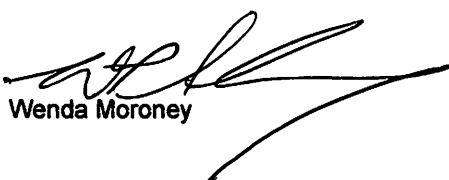
		Unrestricted Funds	Last Year
	Notes	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>			
Membership subscriptions	1	9,786	8,441
Concert receipts	2	2,996	2,211
Gift Aid		1,522	0
Social event receipts	3	689	260
Donations (unrestricted)		24	97
Bank interest received		22	1
Miscellaneous income		5	5
<b>Total receipts</b>		<b>£15,044</b>	<b>£11,015</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Fees to Music Director		6,700	4,996
Hire of premises		3,025	2,409
Grants to charities		2,040	1,150
Social event payments	4	808	260
Stationery, printing & copying		319	98
Membership and ticketing fees	5	270	101
Insurance		96	96
Gifts and presentations		59	67
Website expenses	6	0	101
<b>Total payments</b>		<b>£13,316</b>	<b>£9,278</b>
<b>Surplus of receipts over payments</b>		<b>1,727</b>	<b>1,737</b>
<b>Net cash funds at 1 March 2023</b>		<b>4,119</b>	<b>2,382</b>
<b>Net cash funds at 29 February 2024</b>		<b>£5,846</b>	<b>£4,119</b>

## Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 29 February 2024

		Unrestricted Funds	Last Year
	Notes	£	£
<b>Cash funds</b>			
Bank current account		3,258	3,558
Bank deposit account		2,578	556
PayPal account		10	5
		<b>£5,846</b>	<b>£4,119</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Fees for music director	7	1,164	1,074
Hire of premises	7	617	461
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>£1,781</b>	<b>£1,535</b>

The notes referred to above form part of these accounts

Approved by the trustees on 26 March 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

  
Wenda Moroney

  
David d'Arcy-Hughes

## Notes to the accounts

- 1 **Membership subscriptions** are gross receipts before transaction fees charged by GOCARDLESS which manages Direct debit charges to members
- 2 **Concert receipts** are gross receipts from ticket sales (before ticketing fees) and receipts from retiring collections.
- 3 **Social event receipts** during this period (£689) are payments made by members for a restaurant meal after our performance at the Christmas Market. These receipts were marginally more than the payments made to the restaurant (£658).
- 4 **Social event payments** include charges for the Christmas restaurant meal (fully recovered from those attending), interval refreshments at concerts and beverages at end-of-term social events.
- 5 **Membership & ticketing fees** are fees taken by GOCARDLESS for the administration of membership subscriptions and fees taken by TicketSource for the administration of ticket sales.
- 6 **Website expenses** paid last year covered a two-year period
- 7 **Liabilities** represent the music director's fees for rehearsals in January and February 2024 and hire of premises for rehearsals in February 2024. They are due for payment by 31 March 2024.
- 8 **Last year** amounts relate to the period from 17 March 2022 to 28 February 2023.

# Winchester Community Choir

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## Report of the independent examiner to the trustees of Winchester Community Choir (registered charity no. 1198281)

I report to the trustees of the Winchester Community Choir ("the Trust") on my examination of the accounts of the Trust for the period 1 March 2023 to 29 February 2024, as set out on pages 8 and 9.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

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


I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act, and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 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 give me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- the 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.



Christopher J Napier  
Chartered Accountant  
22 Arlington Place, Gordon Road,  
Winchester, SO23 7TR

4 April 2024