

Winchester Community Choir

Registered Charity Number 1198281

Trustees Annual Report and Accounts

for the period from 1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025

Winchester Community Choir

a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England

Trustees Annual Report for the period from 1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025

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

Committee Members serving during the year:

The following trustees and committee members served during the reporting period:

Jim Benson	Trustee from 09-Jun-2023
Christel Buis	Committee Member from 18-Jul-2023
Hazel Chenhall	Trustee from 17-Mar-2022, re-elected 30-Apr-2024
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, re-elected 30-Apr-2024
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, re-elected 30-Apr-2024
Wenda Moroney	Treasurer, from 17-Mar-2022

In attendance	
Carolyn Robson	Music Director

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Chair's Foreword

The start of Winchester Community Choir's year was shrouded in uncertainty, with our Musical Director Carolyn Robson in recovery mode following a severe medical episode. The year ended on a high with the choir tackling a demanding repertoire for our 20th Anniversary Summer Concert under the watchful eye of Carolyn's talented successor, Zack Stephens. The great news that Carolyn would make a full recovery was tempered by the decision that, on medical advice, she had to reduce her workload and leave her role with us. Carolyn was only the second Musical Director of Winchester Community Choir having taken over in 2013 on the tragic death of her, and our, dear friend Sarah Morgan. And over eleven years she has taken us forward to the successful and enjoyable choir we have today. We owe a huge debt of thanks to Carolyn for the industry, expertise and enthusiasm she gave to us. We wish her all good fortune and look forward to seeing her regularly in the years to come.

The appointment of a new Musical Director, only the second time in twenty years we have had to undertake this task, proved to be less traumatic than we had feared. Zack Stephens, a virtuoso violinist and choral entrepreneur with a burgeoning local reputation stood in as our interim Musical Director and then accepted our invitation to take over the role permanently. After an initial culture shock on both sides it became clear that we had secured exactly the right person to direct us into the next stage of our journey and, in the immediate term, guide us through a busy and challenging programme to celebrate our twentieth year.

2024/25 was another year of varied events and performances which are detailed in the Activities and Achievements section of this Report. We continued to operate in line with our Charitable Objectives, providing an accessible choir for people local to Winchester, running social events and performances varying from large scale public concerts to small groups entertaining local Nursing Home residents and we raised some £2000 for two local charities, the Winchester Sea Cadets and the Winchester Hospice.

On the administrative side, we improved our website by adding facilities to cover the sale of songbooks and scores, a box office for ticket sales and an improved process for accessing sound files for home rehearsing purposes. We are fortunate to have in Denis Gibson a committee member who understands the technicalities of these innovations and keeps up to speed with the latest technological developments.

The choir numbers remain healthy with a good representation across the age groups and as can be seen from the Financial Review at the end of this Report we remain in a healthy state in financial terms and have achieved the targeted level of reserves to guard against future pandemics or other rainy days. Following a lively debate across the membership we introduced a Rehearsal and Performance Standards paper setting out some guidelines for membership without inhibiting our Charitable Objective of providing an accessible community choir for local people.

It remains to me to thank most sincerely the committee members listed at the head of this Report and other choir members who assist on an ad hoc basis, our Musical Director Zack Stephens and all those without whom there would be no choir. It takes a huge amount of work to manage a group of 90-odd people and we are fortunate to be able to call upon such an efficient and cheerful team to undertake it. In particular may I thank Christopher Napier who after many years of auditing our accounts is stepping down.

By the end of the period covered by this Report we had set off into our 20th year with its event-laden programme of varied activities. We are already meeting the challenge of learning two of the three songs commissioned to celebrate the anniversary and we wait with anticipation to receive *The River* by Oliver Tarney.

I can report with confidence that the Winchester Community Choir is flourishing, solvent and in good heart and voice at this time.

David d'Arcy Hughes, Chair of Trustees

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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 30 April 2024.

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.

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 73 grants totalling £46,415.

Activities and Achievements

The year began with Zack Stephens as our locum Music Director, while Carolyn Robson recovered from a serious stroke she suffered in February 2024. Carolyn made a good recovery but took some sensible life-style decisions to ensure her future health. Unfortunately, her new resolutions included stepping down from community choirs in Petersfield and Winchester. Carolyn had been at the helm in Winchester Community Choir for a decade and we were so sorry to lose her. Choir members were extremely generous in their contributions to Carolyn's leaving gift – an arbour which now graces her lovely garden on the sandy soils of Farnham.

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We were delighted when Zack Stephens accepted the offer to become our substantive Music Director in March 2024. Zack is a graduate in Violin Performance from The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. He has a varied teaching career, giving masterclasses and workshops, teaching his own private classes, and he is on the faculty of Queen Mary's College in Basingstoke as professor of violin, music theory, and composition. He is also the principal conductor and director of two of Hampshire's most beloved choirs: the Andover Museum Loft Singers and us!

Rehearsals in the Spring Term focused on songs for our summer concert. We continued with pieces that Carolyn Robson had begun. Zack's first contribution to this repertoire was Paul Sartin's arrangement of The *Unst Boat Song* and his own arrangement of the hauntingly beautiful *I love my love*, which sadly did not make it from rehearsal to performance. The term ended with a post-rehearsal bring-and-share social event, with entertainments. Zack played for us - a beautiful performance of the *Allemande* from J S Bach's *Violin Partita No. 2 in D Minor* (BWV 1004).

In the Summer Term we consulted choir members on the important questions: 'What sort of choir are we?'; 'What standard should we aim for in rehearsal and in our public performances?' After very helpful feedback from the choir, we published our *Rehearsal and Performance Standards* in June 2024. This document sets out some important rules and aspirations for the choir, its committee and Music Director.

Also in the Summer Term, we launched a new service to provide music scores for readers who were happy to pay an additional subscription towards licencing costs for those works where we do not have permission to make copies free-of-charge. By the end of this reporting year about half the choir were subscribers.

In June we began to plan celebrations for our 20th anniversary in 2025, called for ideas and set up a sub-group of the choir committee to make detailed plans. The eventual outcome was a programme of 14 events and activities to take place in our anniversary year, including the commissioning of new choir arrangements, a workshop, lecture and social events, as well as two special concerts in the summer and at Christmas.

Our summer concert on 9 July was attended by Winchester's Lord Mayor, Councillor Russell Gordon-Smith. One of his charities, Sea Cadets Winchester, was a beneficiary of the retiring collection and a share of ticket revenues. The choir sang shanties and ballads about the sea, choir member Catherine Bussey played a selection of traditional maritime tunes on her tenor recorder, and Zack Stephens performed The Red Violin Caprice from a film score by John Corigliano.

Over the summer break 2024, the choir upgraded its website so that we could offer for sale scores and songbooks of choir arrangements made by our Music Directors past and present. The on-line store initially featured publications from the Sarah Morgan Foundation (SMF) and Reiver Music (Carolyn Robson's publisher). SMF generously contributed to the costs of the upgrade. The new site also provides a box office so that we can sell concert tickets in-house, with cheaper transactions costs than our previous ticketing service.

The autumn term was all about preparing for a busy Christmas programme. The choir sang at the Christmas Market in the Cathedral's Inner Close at the end of November, with the usual warming social event afterwards at The Stable in The Square. A record attendance of 40 singers this year. We sang carols in December at, Flowerdown Care Home, Sutton Manor Care Home and the Royal Hampshire County Hospital. And, of course, we held our Christmas concert – this year on 3 December. New to our seasonal repertoire were: Edgar Pettman's arrangement of the Basque carol *The Angel Gabriel*; the *Sans Day Carol* from Cornwall, arranged by Paul Sartin; and three of Zack's arrangements – *Sing Ivy* (a 'bonkers' folk song of 'marvels and lies' collected in the village of Easton just outside Winchester), the 17th century *Bodmin First Wassailing Song* and the lovely *Coventry Carol*. We gave our audience the chance to join in singing four congregational carols, with choir member John Ramage as accompanist on The United Church's new grand piano. And Zack Stephens played Charles Gounod's *Ave Maria*. The concert was a fundraiser for Winchester Hospice, nominated by choir and committee member Jim Benson. The hospice received a share of the ticket receipts and the whole of the retiring collection.

The Spring Term 2025 began with a rehearsal and social event which was well attended by members and new people trying the choir for the first time. We launched our anniversary photobook, *Winchester Community Choir – the first twenty years*, a collection of reminiscences from founder members and more recent joiners, historic and contemporary photos, and items from the choir archives.

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Also at the first rehearsal of 2025, we published our programme of anniversary events. It is an ambitious programme supported by many friends of the choir and volunteers. Special mention is due to the trustees of the Sarah Morgan Foundation who have made a grant towards the cost of the new works we have commissioned; to Christine and Julian Arienns of SuperReal who have volunteered to record some of the songs from our summer repertoire; and to Beccy Read and trustees of the Martin read Foundation for permission to perform Martin's Winchester love song, *On the Steps of the Butter Cross*, at our July concert.

Rehearsals in January focused on learning two new works that are entirely home-grown. One is a new commission to fit with the theme of our anniversary concert in the summer, *Made in Winchester*. The commission from Zack Stephens and choir member Iris Gould is called *Sing for Winchester* and it is a celebration of the history, architecture and culture of our hometown. The introductory section is based on music from the 11th century, written down in one of two Cathedral songbooks called the Winchester Tropers. The other new work, *Moontide*, is also a collaboration by Zack and Iris. We give the premier performance of these two songs at our concert on 3 July 2025.

Other favourites from the choir's repertoire feature in our rehearsal schedule this term: *Harbour*, *Mingulay Boat Song*, *Shenandoah*, and *View the Land*. They are all arrangements by musicians who have a close individual or family tie to Winchester Community Choir. Appropriate, we think, for a concert that marks 20 years of singing their work.

The year ended with an experiment. For some time, it has been possible for electronics and software to produce the sound of musical instruments. But singing was limited to producing ah's and oo's. In February we trialled three products that produce, directly from a music score, a computer-generated voice singing lyrics. Each software application had some limitations, but the committee decided to invest in an application called Ace Studio for producing sound files for our new repertoire. It also decided to subscribe to SOUNDSLICE, an application that allows singers to hear sound files while a cursor scans through the scores or lyrics. We hope these resources will help our singers to learn a new and challenging repertoire in our 20th year.

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				£45,186
2024	Sea Cadets, Winchester	Life skills for young people	£850	
2024	Winchester Hospice	End-of-life care	£379	
Total grants awarded in 2024/25				£1,229
GRAND TOTAL				£46,415

Here is the detail:

- (1) Our summer concert was a fundraiser for one of the Mayor of Winchester's charities, Sea cadets Winchester. A retiring collection and a share of ticket revenues allowed us to make a grant of £850;
- (2) As a result of our Christmas concert, we were able to make a grant of £379 to Winchester Hospice in addition to the retiring donations received from our generous audience and banked directly into the charity's account. Altogether, the concert raised £765 for the hospice. In Table 1 above, we only show the donations that passed through the choir's bank account.

Winchester Community Choir

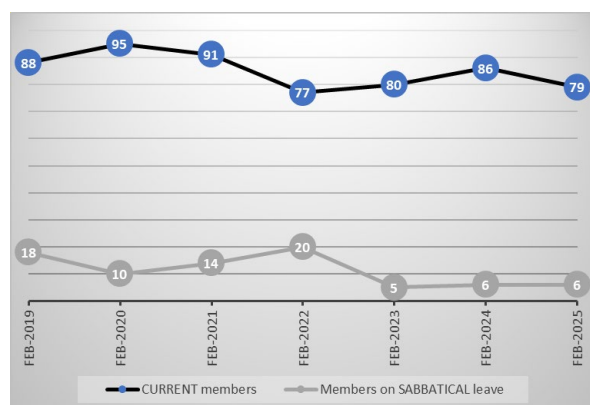
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Membership

We were delighted to welcome new members who started with us in during 2023/24 and sorry to say 'Farewell' to those who left us. At the end of our financial year, our choir numbered 79 members with 6 people taking sabbatical leave. A time series showing choir membership over the last six years is in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1 Membership statistics, 2018 to 2025



Financial review

The trustees have prepared Receipts and Payments Accounts for the period from 1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025. See page 8-8. 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.¹
- (3) The accounts show a surplus of receipts over payments of £2,356 for the period.
- (4) We pay for Music Director fees termly in arrears. The amount not paid in the accounting period for the Music Director's fees, amounts to £1,295 and is due to be paid in March 2025.
- (5) The trustees planned to build the charity's reserves during 2024/25 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 2024-25 amount to £6,907 (= net cash funds of £8,202 less liabilities of £1,295). The trustees are pleased with this level of reserves because our 20th anniversary programme of events in 2025/26 will result in some expenditure not usually incurred in an ordinary financial year.

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. Membership has remained stable for the last year, averaging about 80 members;

¹ '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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- (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. We are fortunate in having Zack Stephens in the substantive role and have contacts should locums ever be required.

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 67% 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 8% of expenditure. This expenditure directly supports our second objective - the relief of those in need.
- (3) 6% of payments are for gifts and presentations – unusually high this year because of the generosity of choir members in contributing to Carolyn Robson's leaving gift.
- (4) 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.
- (5) The remaining 13% of expenditure covers the commissioning of new repertoire, payments for social events (offset by receipts from members who participated), and advance payments for events in the choir's 20th anniversary programme.

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

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Winchester Community Choir

(registered Charity No.1198281)

Receipts and Payments Account

for the period from 1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025

		Unrestricted Funds	Last Year
	Notes	£	£
Receipts			
Membership subscriptions	1	9,956	9,652
Sales	2	3,581	3,011
Gift Aid		1,793	1,522
Donations	3	1,250	562
Miscellaneous income	4	1,150	5
Bank interest received		34	22
Total receipts		£17,764	£14,774
Payments			
Fees for Music Director		6,426	6,700
Hire of premises	5	3,873	3,025
Cost of items sold	6	1,489	0
Grants to charities	7	1,229	2,040
Gifts and presentations	8	895	59
Miscellaneous expenditure	9	750	0
IT and software	10	359	0
Stationery, printing & copying		163	319
Event expenses	11	128	808
Insurance		96	96
Total payments		£15,408	£13,047
Surplus of receipts over payments		2,356	1,727
Net cash funds at start of year		5,846	4,119
Net cash funds at year end		£8,202	£5,846

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 28 February 2025

		Unrestricted Funds	Last Year
	Notes	£	£
Cash funds			
Bank current account		3,585	3,258
Bank deposit account		4,612	2,578
PayPal account		5	10
		£8,202	£5,846
Liabilities	12		
Fees for music director		1,295	1,164
Hire of premises		0	617
Total liabilities		£0	£1,781

The notes referred to above form part of these accounts

Approved by the trustees on 29th April 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Signature

Signature

Wenda Moroney

David d'Arcy-Hughes

Notes to the accounts

- A. Because the choir is doing more and selling more things, we have reorganised some of the categories under which we report receipts and payments. This is explained below for each of the categories affected. Last year's receipts and payments have been mapped onto the new categories. We have also simplified our reporting by showing net receipts for membership subscriptions and sales.
1. Membership subscriptions are net receipts after transaction fees charged by GOCARDLESS which manages Direct Debit charges to members. Last year we reported gross receipts and showed fees as a payment.
 2. Sales include receipts from the sale of concert tickets and charges for social events, which were reported separately last year. In addition, there are new types of sales made through the choir's on-line e-commerce platform, e.g. subscriptions for the use of music scores by choir members, the sale of the choir's anniversary photobook, the sale of songbooks and musical scores on behalf of our music directors (past and present). The sales are reported net after transaction fees charged by Wix (our e-commerce provider) and PayPal.
 3. Donations now include the amount given in retiring collections at concerts, where the choir (rather than the benefiting charity) is responsible for banking the receipts. Previously retiring collections were reported as concert receipts.
 4. Miscellaneous income comprises two grants from the Sarah Morgan Foundation: £850 to support the choir's 20th anniversary programme of events; £300 as a contribution to the cost of setting up the choir's on-line store which will sell (amongst other things) Sarah Morgan's songbooks, income from which will benefit the Foundation.
 5. Hire of premises comprises our ordinary expenditure on the hire of the United Church Winchester for rehearsals and concerts (£3,131), and extraordinary expenditure on deposits to secure venues for our anniversary events in the next financial year (£742)
 6. Cost of items sold includes ordinary in-year expenditure on licences to copy music for those who subscribe to scores (£157) and social events that are charged to members (£742). This line also includes the cost of printing our anniversary photobook (£440) and deposit payments for anniversary events that will happen in the next financial year (£150).
 7. Grants to charities includes all the donations given in retiring collections that are banked by the choir and which pass through our current bank account. For the first time this financial year, the charity we supported at our Christmas concert banked the retiring collection themselves and these donations do not appear in our accounts.
 8. Gifts and presentations comprise ordinary expenditure on gifts for our MD and performers at concerts (£75), and extraordinary expenditure on a leaving gift for Carolyn Robson, funded by member donations (£820)
 9. Miscellaneous expenditure is a deposit payment for the commissioning of a new work from Oliver Tarney.
 10. IT and software includes the cost of renewing our website builder and domain for two years.
 11. Event expenses comprise expenditure on social and other events that are not directly recouped by charging the participants (e.g. drinks at start-of-term socials). The cost of social events that are recharged to participants (e.g. Christmas supper at The Stable) are now shown under Cost of items sold.
 12. Liabilities represent the Fees for music director for rehearsals in January and February 2025 and Hire of premises for rehearsals in February 2025. They are due for payment by 31 March 2025.

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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 2024 to 29 February 2025, as set out on pages 8 and 8.

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

Date: