

COLCHESTER OPERATIC SOCIETY

England & Wales · Charity number 1198865

Details

Other names	COLCHESTER OPERATIC SOCIETY SECOND EDITION
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2022-05-09
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	15 Parkside Quarter Colchester CO1 1EA
Phone	01206541086
Email	chair@colchesteroperaticsociety.co.uk
Website	www.colchesteroperaticsociety.co.uk

Activities

Objects: TO PROMOTE AND IMPROVE GENERAL EDUCATION IN RELATION TO ALL ASPECTS OF THE ART OF DRAMA AND MUSICAL THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT.

Activities: We're an amateur musical theatre company (consisting of members from 11 years & over) that produce shows & concerts in Colchester for the general public. Membership is open to all aged 16yrs plus & 11-24 yrs for our youth section, providing opportunities to learn, perform & participate in local Theatre. We also put on singing, acting & dancing workshops for members & the local community.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** Arts/culture/heritage/science
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Throughout England

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£113,350	£116,364	-	-
2024-03-31	£116,397	£99,039	-	-
2023-03-31	£113,161	£109,844	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Katie Cutmore	Chair	2013-06-17
Ana Margarita Fernandez Lorenzo		2025-05-29
Caroline Fritz		2023-06-26
Charlotte Turnnidge		2022-11-29
Jessica Bailey		2022-02-22
Rachel Emma Darley		2026-04-02
Susan Mitchell		2025-09-28
Susannah Skelton		2025-04-30
Valentine Cavanagh-White		2024-02-19

COLCHESTER OPERATIC SOCIETY

England & Wales - Charity number 1198865

Accounts



COLCHESTER OPERATIC SOCIETY	1198865
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CC16a

Receipts and payments accounts			
For the period from	01/04/2024	To	31/03/2025

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					
Voluntary Income	109,306	-	-	109,306	111,241
Donations	158	-	-	158	137
Bank Interest	1,448	-	-	1,448	1,013
Grants	768	-	-	768	2,045
Subs	1,670	-	-	1,670	1,960
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	113,350	-	-	113,350	116,397
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	113,350	-	-	113,350	116,397
A3 Payments					
Charitable Activities	110,342	-	-	110,342	95,290
Accountancy Cost	360	-	-	360	600
Insurance	981	-	-	981	890
Admin Costs	4,682	-	-	4,682	2,259
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	116,364	-	-	116,364	99,039
A4 Asset and investment purchases. (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	116,364	-	-	116,364	99,039
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 3,015	-	-	- 3,015	17,357
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	120,497	-	-	120,497	103,140
Cash funds this year end	117,482	-	-	117,482	120,497

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 & Bank	113,883	-	-
	Long Term Loan	3,000	-	-
	Fixed Asset	599	-	-
	Accrual	-	-	-
	Total cash funds	117,482	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	-	-	-
	Mac Book	599.19	749	599
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
	<i>Katmore</i>	Katie Cutmore	21/05/2025	



COLCHESTER OPERATIC SOCIETY		1198865		CC16a
Receipts and payments accounts				
For the period from	01/04/2024	To	31/03/2025	

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	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
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	-	-	-	-	-
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	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
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	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
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	Long Term Loan	3,000	-	-
	Fixed Asset	599	-	-
	Accrual	-	-	-
	Total cash funds	117,482	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	-	-	-
	Mac Book	599.19	749	599
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
	<i>Katmore</i>	Katie Cutmore	21/05/2025	



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Colchester Operatic Society

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2025

**Charity no
(if any)**

1198865

Set out on pages

One and Two

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31 / 03 / 2024**.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed 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 (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed: *V Mellett*

Date: 22/05/2025

Name: Vincent Mellett

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

FCCA

Address: 122 Feering Hill, Feering

Colchester, Essex

CO5 9PY

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

COLCHESTER OPERATIC SOCIETY

England & Wales - Charity number 1198865

Accounts



Colchester Operatic Society
Registered Charity no. 1198865
15 Parkside Quarter,
Colchester,
Essex,
CO1 1EA

Annual report of the trustees for year ending 31st March 2024

Our structure and governance

Colchester Operatic Society's (also referred to as "the/our Society" and/or "COS" throughout this report) is an amateur musical theatre company (consisting of members from 11 years & over) that produce shows & concerts in Colchester for the general public. Membership is open to all aged 16yrs plus & 11-23 years for our youth section, providing opportunities to learn, perform & participate in local theatre. We also put on singing, acting & dancing workshops for members & the local community. We registered as a charity with the charity commission on 9th May 2022, governed by our CIO Association Constitution which refers to our charity trustees as the Executive Committee. Our youth section operates under the name CO2 (Colchester Operatic Society Second Edition) but is part of our charitable organisation.

In addition to our constitution, we have supplementary rules to govern our youth section (referred to as "CO2" throughout this report) and the following policies and procedures currently in place (these are regularly reviewed, and new policies are adopted as necessary and appropriate. All policies can be found on [our Society website](#)):

- Safeguarding Policy (updated annually in April)
- Privacy Policy (updated August 2023)
- Complaints Policy (updated November 2023)
- Conflicts of Interest Policy (updated April 2024)
- Inclusion, Equality and Diversity Policy (updated October 2023)
- Health & Safety Policy (updated April 2024)
- Social Media Policy (updated September 2023)
- Ethical Fundraising Policy (updated March 2022, reviewed August 2023 no changes made)
- Records Management Policy (updated November 2022, reviewed April 2024 no changes made)
- Cast Code of Conduct (updated July 2023)
- Volunteer Code of Conduct (updated August 2023)
- Executive Committee Code of Conduct (updated August 2023)
- Guidance on the use of ICT equipment and handling emails (updated August 2022, reviewed August 2023 no changes made)
- Audition Processes (updated September 2023)

Membership of the Society (COS) for 2023-2024 stood at 118 members at our last AGM (26th June 2023) rising to 162 as we came to the end of the year. Our last AGM was



attended by 34 members. Our youth section (CO2) had 47 members (an increase of 10 members from last year) but many more young people participating in our activities throughout the year (see “purposes and activities” section below).

Our Executive Committee manages the Society and is annually elected at our AGM in June/July, although trustees are recruited throughout the year if Executive Committee members stand down, depending on the needs of the Society. For this year, our Executive Committee consisted of the following trustees:

Name of Trustee	Role/Office	Date acted if not for whole year
Katie Cutmore	Chair Deputy Safeguarding Lead	
Neil Somerville	Treasurer	
Max Woodward	Secretary	Up until 11 th February 2024
Natasha Gadenne	Secretary	From 11 th February 2024
Amy Wilson	Business Manager	Up until 26 th June 2023
Caroline Fritz	Business Manager	From 26 th June 2023
Laura Hicks	Assistant Secretary	
Charlotte Butcher	Chair of CO2 (Colchester Operatic Society Second Edition: our Youth section) Safeguarding Lead	
Claudia Haswell	Committee Member & Inclusion Lead	Inclusion lead up until 19 th April 2023, Trustee for whole year
Andrew Hodgson	Vice-Chair	
Jessica Bailey	Marketing & Events Lead	
Rebecca Lee	Committee Member & Inclusion Lead	Inclusion lead from 19 th April 2023, Trustee up until 11 th February 2024
Wayne Setford	Funding Co-ordinator	
Valentine Cavanagh-White	Committee Member & Inclusion Lead	From 19 th February 2024

We extend thanks to all those who served as a trustee over the course of this year, without whom we could not continue our work.

The Executive Committee seeks and responds to views of members and the wider public when making decisions about our activities and governs and operates the Society for public benefit, having due regard to the charity commission’s public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties, to which the guidance is relevant.

Risk Management

We hold public liability insurance and carry out risk assessments for our work and activities to manage/control any Health and Safety risks. Our Bank Account has



double signatories to safeguard the charity finances and ensure money is only spent as agreed by its trustees for its purpose and associated activities.

To manage risk for our young people, we have safeguarding leads in place who ensure the wider membership, volunteers and other professionals/organisations we work with are aware of and follow our safeguarding policy. We ensure those working directly with young people are suitable to do so, are appropriately supervised and/or have clear DBS checks in place as necessary and appropriate. We also ensure DBS checked Chaperones are in place at rehearsals and performances to ensure the safety and well-being of our young members/performers.

Chair's Report

Our 99th year as Colchester Operatic Society saw us build on the success of last year, through continued teamwork driven by a shared passion for musical theatre, meeting our charity's purpose and providing valuable learning experiences for all. Through producing shows and events, addressing audiences and sharing information publicly on our website and through social media we have increased the public awareness of our work and continued to see evidence of the difference it makes to the general public as well as those members involved in creating our productions and events.

I am very grateful to our audiences for their continued support in coming to see our productions and their donations towards our work. Thanks to previous funding and a grant from the Harvey Benham Charitable Trust, we have been able to continue awarding bursaries, which this year included a show fee bursary to 3 applicants over 3 of our productions (My Fair Lady and upcoming productions of Legally Blonde and Some Enchanted Evening), which has enabled members to participate when otherwise they may not have been able to afford to. Thank you also goes to Ellisons Solicitors and The Harvey Benham Charitable Trust, whose generous donations contributed to captioned performances for our CO2 show, School of Rock, and our 2024 production of My Fair Lady. This funding enabled us to continue to provide inclusive performances through captioning to improve access for the public to our productions.

I personally thank all trustees serving on the Executive Committee for their continued support, dedication, time and hard work throughout the year. We have worked hard as a team to continue to move the Society forwards, so our members and members of the future can enjoy and learn from being part of our musical theatre productions and the public can benefit from the work we create. I would also like to thank all our members for their continued support through paying membership subscriptions, taking part in our shows and events and volunteering in essential roles backstage and on all of our sub-committees. I am so pleased to have seen even more new volunteers keen to support our productions backstage over this last year, sharing their expertise and learning through the opportunities we have provided them. It is the continued contribution from our talented, diverse and passionate membership and volunteers along with support from our audiences that will keep our Society thriving into the future.

Katie Cutmore

Chair of Colchester Operatic Society



Our purpose and activities

Our charitable purpose is to promote and improve general education in relation to all aspects of the art of drama and musical theatrical performance for the public benefit.

This year we have met this purpose through the following activities:

We produced a summer concert called “Iconic”, which ran at the Headgate theatre from 14th to 17th June 2023 with a cast of 21 members performing 98 songs, as part of a variety of medleys from a diverse range of Iconic artists, showcasing the Society’s strength in harmonies/chorus work. The concert concept was devised by Diane Emberton, a Society member, who put together the set list with a hired local creative, Phil Toms, as our Musical Director (MD). Our MD provided cast members learning opportunities as he shared his musical skills and expertise when teaching them the harmonies and music. Cast members rehearsed over a 4 month period leading up to the concert, learning songs, harmonies and putting these together with movement/choreography, displaying fantastic team spirit and enjoyment which translated to the audiences. Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances, Diane was not able to continue as Director for this concert as planned. However, our Chair and concert cast member, Katie Cutmore was able to step in to take on this role part-way through the rehearsal process. She was supported by Society member, Zoe Farrelly, who choreographed some numbers alongside Katie. This concert therefore provided directing and choreography opportunities to these members to further their experience and skills in this area. The cast were all on stage for the majority of the concert as they (or a small group of them for some numbers) were involved in sections of every medley/song. Adding movement on to learning so many songs and harmonies provided our cast with a challenge, which they rose to and benefitted from stretching themselves to achieve a quality performance, which entertained our audiences. Our concert programme available to purchase for audience members, detailed the history of the featured Iconic artists and their songs.

In July we held pre-audition workshops for our production My Fair Lady, which were open to the public, followed by auditions for those interested in joining as members and performing in the show. We had a record attendance to auditions for this show, with 73 auditionees taking part, many of which were new to the Society but had seen recent shows that had inspired them to get involved.

Following auditions, we cast 45 members, which included 9 new members to the Society. Rehearsals began in September running through to the production in January 2024 (see later for more information).

In August we ran a stall at Colchester pride, promoting our Society and the work we do to members of the public attending the event (which comprised of a high proportion of the local LGBTQ+ community), making links with other community organisations,



continuing our work on Inclusion, Equality and Diversity by increasing awareness of our work to our diverse local community.

We had 45 CO2 members (aged 9-18) participate in our CO2 production of School of Rock this year, with rehearsals running over a 6-month period from March 2023 through to the performances at the Mercury Theatre, Colchester from 5th to 8th October 2023. We hired local creatives (Ashton Moore as Musical Director with Laura Hicks and Leah Scott as co-directors) who supported and educated our young members throughout the rehearsal and production process, giving them the opportunity to develop skills in acting, singing and dancing. In addition, this show gave 5 young people the unique opportunity to play live instruments on stage, one of which learnt their instrument (bass guitar) from scratch for this show. We had 3 volunteer musicians who supported our young people as instrument mentors, two of which went on to perform in the pit for the show, when we made the decision to move from using backing tracks to using a live band, to support the young people playing live on stage.

The one week run for this show was a success, with cast entertaining full houses for most performances, receiving standing ovations and the show selling 99% of tickets over the whole run (with only 25 seats unsold across the performances). Programmes with more information about the show and our Society were available to purchase for audience members. One of our cast members spoke to the audiences at the end of each show to raise awareness of the work we do, future work we have coming up and ways they can support us through donations, raising £973.49, which helped meet our production costs. We provided a captioned performance of the show increasing accessibility to our work for the public. The deputy mayor at the time, who is deaf, attended one of our captioned performances and showed great appreciation for the work we continue doing to make our productions more accessible for all. Many of our adult membership supported backstage during the show run of School of Rock, joining some of our newer volunteers, all developing skills and gaining experience in the hidden elements of musical theatre that go on behind the scenes to make the magic happen on stage for audiences.

In October we advertised publicly for creatives to get involved in our next upcoming productions (The Little Mermaid and Legally Blonde), increasing awareness to all about the different roles involved in putting on a production and providing opportunities for local creatives to get involved. We received a number of responses from a variety of creatives, which the trustees then considered, shortlisted and voted on who to appoint in varying roles through a fair and transparent process. The applications received evidenced public awareness of the work we do.

In December, we organised a group of our members, including some of the cast of our production of My Fair Lady, to participate and lead carol singing outside of the Mercury Theatre and at a local pub, the Swan in Chappell. Members of the public watched and were encouraged to join in with the singing and we were able to promote our upcoming production of My Fair Lady to those who wanted to know more about our work. Additionally, a small group of our members also sang carols for patients at the stroke unit in our local hospital, facilitated by one of our members who works there.



We produced “My Fair Lady”, which was performed by our cast of 42 members at the Mercury Theatre, Colchester from 25th January to 4th February 2024. The number of cast reduced during the rehearsal process as some cast members’ withdrew due to changes in personal circumstances. We hired local creatives (Geoff Osborne as Musical Director, Claire Carr as Director and Holly Bird as Assistant Director) who directed and supported our talented cast throughout the 6-month rehearsal and production process as they utilised and developed their singing, acting and dancing skills. Many cast members had never been in a musical theatre production before, so along with learning performance skills, they learnt about all aspects of what it takes to put on a large-scale musical theatre production. For this show, cast were used extensively for scene changes allowing for seamless transitions and a smooth-running show, commented on positively by many audience members. This was a steep learning curve for the cast involved, who rose to the challenge, and this provided insight and first-hand experience into the role of our backstage volunteers that support with scene changes.

Due to the period this show was set and the Director’s vision, this show required a lot of wigs and some facial hair pieces. We recruited a volunteer who had a degree in hair and make-up for media and performing arts and she was able to create her own facial hair pieces bespoke for the cast members who required them. She gave up her time and expertise for free to gain further experience in theatrical hair and make-up work. Several My Fair Lady auditionees who were not successful in being cast in the show supported as part of our backstage team, learning new skills and gaining an insight into other areas of musical theatre. In addition, we had a young volunteer ask to join our backstage team for this show only a week before we got into the theatre. By the start of the dress rehearsal he was stepping into the follow spot role, due to the original follow spot volunteer becoming injured outside of our activities. This is something he had not done before but guided by our experienced follow spot volunteer, he learnt a new skill and did a fantastic job.

We provided two captioned performances of the show, again increasing accessibility to our work for the public. Our talented cast performed to full audiences with 85% of tickets being sold across the production run, with some standing ovations and great audience reactions and reviews. One of our cast members spoke to audiences at the end of each performance to continue to raise awareness of the work we do as a charity and ways they can support us through donations, raising £1616.95, which helped meet our production costs. In addition to this we included information on how we work and how members of the public can support us, on our promotional fliers and in our programmes on sale to audience members during the show. Our programmes also contained information about the show, the cast and our Society.

After My Fair Lady, we moved onto auditions for our centenary concert “Some Enchanted Evening”, which is set to take place at the Mercury Theatre 21st June 2024. This is a one night only gala concert celebrating 100 years of Colchester Operatic



Society and features past COS/CO2 members as returning guest performers alongside our cast and a guest slot from the CO2 cast of Legally Blonde. This production is being coordinated by a select group of trustees, including Neil Somerville as our concert MD. In March 2024, we had a variety of current, new and returning members audition to be part of this concert, including some existing CO2 members. We cast 44 members following 4 audition dates. During these auditions our MD gave auditionees some notes for improving their audition performance and a second chance to perform their audition, taking on board these notes, using the auditions as a teaching and learning opportunity for these members. We saw evidence that our production of My Fair Lady had succeeded in raising awareness to the public, when new members joining our concert cast cited seeing our production of My Fair Lady as one of the reasons they got involved. We have also continued to receive emails from members of the public asking to get involved behind the scenes for future shows.

In March we had 132 young people (aged 11 to 23 years old) attend our singing, acting and dancing pre-audition workshops for our next CO2 production of Legally Blonde, set to be performed at the Mercury theatre, Colchester in October 2024. This resulted in 45 young people (aged 11 to 23 years old) being cast for the show, with rehearsals starting at the end of March, led by hired creatives, Rob Miles as Musical Director, Matt Jewson as Director and Sarah James as Choreographer. We had correspondence from the parents of some of the young people who attended the workshops but did not get cast, thanking us for the experience during the workshops, evidencing how much they learnt from it.

Plans for the future

Looking forwards, our centenary concert cast continue to rehearse leading up to the performances at the Mercury Theatre on 21st June. We are excited to be heading into our 100th year and will be unveiling new Society logos for the occasion. We are set to hold auditions for our next production, The Little Mermaid, on 7th July (with pre-auditions on 27th June). The audition panel will invite auditionees to audition for specific parts at the Principal auditions on 21st July (with a pre-audition rehearsal on 15th July). Invites will be based on ensemble auditions alongside requests to be considered for specific roles on audition forms. In addition, for this production we are looking for two children/young people to play Flounder (as we are dual-casting the role) with initial auditions for this on 17th July (pre-auditions on 4th July) followed by a call-back audition on 21st July. We have hired creatives to lead and support our future cast with Adam Woodhouse as Director, Laura Hicks as Assistant Director and Neil Somerville as Musical Director. Their vision for the show will involve flying Ariel and having some key characters working in Heelys on stage, providing additional learning opportunities for our cast and crew. It will run at the Mercury Theatre from 31st January to 9th February 2025. Our CO2 production, Legally Blonde will continue with rehearsals culminating in the show run at the Mercury Theatre from 24th to 27th October 2024. We hope to explore providing additional musical theatre opportunities for young people in our community in



the future, after seeing just how many want to be involved in our work following the last two CO2 show audition numbers.

Financial report

Colchester Operatic Society's principal source of funding is ticket sales from our productions and events. In addition to this we receive income from membership subscriptions, workshop/audition fees for our youth section and show fees for members who are cast in a production. We fundraise for donations throughout the year and apply for funding/grants and sponsorship, adhering to our ethical fundraising policy and ensuring any funds raised will be used for the public benefit and do not compromise the independent status of Colchester Operatic Society. This year our income was **£116,396.77**, which included:

- Membership subscriptions of £1960.00 and £45 members contributions to cost of tickets to attend NODA awards
- Income for "Iconic" of £3,596.57 (including £53.24 donations from audience members)
- Income for "School of Rock" of £39,856.96 (this included £973.49 of audience donations)
- Donations of £137.29 across the year (not accounted for in specific shows and including £40.81 raised through carol singing the previous year)
- Income for "My Fair Lady" of £65,452.70 (this included £1616.95 of audience donations)
- Income from pre-audition workshops for our upcoming CO2 show "Legally Blonde" of £2185
- Income from Ellisons Solicitors for captioning of £1000
- Income from The Harvey Benham Charitable Trust grant of £1000 used towards captioning and our bursary fund
- Income from sale of props from "Shrek" (our 2023 show) of £150.00
- Bank Interest of £1013.25

This year our total Expenditure was **£99,039.41**. This has been spent on activities and work to meet our charitable purpose as described above and includes the amounts detailed below.

- We hire a secure storage unit for our physical assets (including, but not limited to, props, costumes, set/furniture pieces, electronic equipment, music stands and instruments). This has cost £1386.00 this financial year.
- We pay for website and email hosting. This has cost £198.98 this financial year.
- As a charity we continued to make use of a subscription to Office 365 for our trustees and to Canva pro for members of our Marketing team for free.
- We hire venues to rehearse and perform in and to host workshops and other Society events, such as our AGM and occasionally other social events.
- A majority of our work is done by volunteers giving their time and skills for free but this is supplemented by hiring professionals in key roles, such as our creative teams, sound and lighting designers and other technical specialists, who enable us to provide higher-quality productions for the public benefit and from whom our volunteers and members learn from whilst participating in these productions.



- Hiring and/or purchasing scenery, materials, costumes, wigs, make-up/prosthetics and props for our productions.
- Licencing fees for performing specific productions and hire of rehearsal materials and orchestra scores.
- Miscellaneous administration fees including printing and postage as necessary.
- General costs for marketing to promote our productions and events to the public. This year we attended Colchester Pride paying for a stall and entrance to our volunteers helping to promote our work at the event, and we have booked to do so again next year, paying in advance, in total this cost us £65.00 this year.
- We pay to print programmes for audience members to provide information on our productions and educate them in the work we do.
- Captioning performances to make them accessible to a wider public audience (This has cost £1770 for our productions in this financial year).
- Collectively expenses (that include the above) for each of our productions this financial year are as follows:
 - “Shrek” (our 2023 show): £30.00 (a rehearsal hire charge that came in late and was paid this financial year)
 - “Iconic”: £539.00
 - “School of Rock”: £32,215.33 (this includes £720 for captioning as detailed above)
 - “My Fair Lady”: £60,077.05 (this includes £1050 for captioning as detailed above)
 - “Some Enchanted Evening” (our upcoming 2024 concert): £684.00
 - “Legally Blonde” (our upcoming 2024 CO2 production): £1748.00
- Expenses for our AGM this year, including administration costs, hiring a venue and presentations of thanks/achievement to individuals involved in our work has cost £27.86 this financial year.
- In addition to ensure we comply with our legal responsibilities we purchase public liability insurance at £890.21. We had to increase our cover this year to ensure we were adequately insured for hired items of scenery (as required in hire agreements from specific companies). We also employ accountants to audit our accounts annually and support us with our tax return and charity commission reporting to ensure we are managing our funds responsibly and transparently. These audited accounts are reported in detail to members annually. This has cost £600.00 this financial year.
- This year we had to renew our OFCOM radio licence costing us £75.00
- We paid for our Safeguarding lead to renew their training at £78.00
- Other miscellaneous administrative expenses & fees not already detailed above (which includes our membership to wider amateur theatre organisations including NODA (National Operatic and Dramatic Association) and NETG (North Essex Theatre Guild)) cost £429.98 this financial year.

Overall, this year we made a **surplus of £17,357.36.**

As our predominant income is from ticket sales, we do always see a fluctuation from year to year on surplus/deficit. Our aim is to continue to provide local musical theatre experiences for the public to participate in, watch and learn from and therefore we are not driven to make profit/a surplus and accept that some productions will make losses



whilst others will make profits/a surplus. This balances out across the years and the trustees work hard to ensure we maintain sufficient reserves to continue our work into the future.

We hold reserves so we are able to pay upfront for future production and event costs and meet ongoing annual costs such as public liability insurance, administration costs, costs to maintain an online presence and costs to securely store and maintain (including repair and replace as necessary) our physical assets. We produce several shows throughout the year, with costs being incurred concurrently and in advance. For example, a budget for a 2-week production at the Mercury Theatre, comes in around £90,000-£100,000 (depending on individual show costs/requirements). Whilst some costs relating to theatre hire are taken directly out of our show income by the theatre prior to the settlement payment being made to us, there are many costs being incurred before we receive any income from ticket sales.

On 31st March 2024, Colchester Operatic Society held £120,137.32 in reserve.

The Colchester Officers Club (another local organisation, who we previously had a close working relationship with) held £5000 of these financial assets, which was loaned to them in 2008. They have paid back £1000 of this loan this year on an agreed payment plan, so we expect to see further payments from them in the future until this is paid back to us. They now hold £4000 of our financial assets.

Our decision to run the CO2 show for one week was successful in ensuring we met our costs and ensured our young cast got to perform to nearly sold-out audiences. We plan to continue this structure for the short-term, whilst it proves successful and ensures the viability of producing shows at the Mercury Theatre for our youth group.

When we got into the theatre for our production of My Fair Lady, we were at 69% sales (not enough to meet our costs) but this rose to 74% on opening night and by the end of the show run we had 85% tickets sold, which according to our show budget meant our income would meet our production costs. Due to some costs being actually lower than expected in our budget, the show ended up making a surplus, going some way to cover previous losses during productions in previous financial years.

This year has seen a surplus, but the trustees recognise there is no guarantee this will continue show to show or year on year. However, this surplus goes straight back into the work we do, and if we continue gaining reserves in the future, these will be spent on areas of growth for the Society to be able to achieve more towards our charitable objectives.

The rising costs of staging such large high-quality productions means we need high % ticket sales to break-even so it's vital we continue to adapt show budgets to spend on the areas that have the most impact for the specific show and our audiences and provide continued learning and performing experiences for all involved, whilst saving in other areas. Whilst we have previously committed to gaining external funding in order to



provide accessible performances (e.g. captioning/signing), the trustees have reflected on the need for accessibility to continue, even if we are not able to gain extra funding, and have therefore decided that this will remain a fixed feature in our show budgets going forwards.

The trustees will continue to monitor the charity's finances and adapt the activities we carry out accordingly to secure its continued running, even through challenging financial climates. If the required ticket sales for large-scale productions continue to be difficult to achieve we will reflect on ticket prices, production choices, venues used and dates productions are planned for, adapting as necessary and as funds allow.



COLCHESTER OPERATIC SOCIETY	1198865
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CC16a

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	01/04/2023	To	31/03/2024
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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					
Voluntary Income	115,246	-	-	115,246	111,928
Donations	137	-	-	137	1,151
Bank Interest	1,013	-	-	1,013	82
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	116,397	-	-	116,397	113,161
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	116,397	-	-	116,397	113,161
A3 Payments					
Charitable Activities	95,290	-	-	95,290	107,028
Accountancy Cost	600	-	-	600	360
Insurance	890	-	-	890	606
Admin Costs	2,259	-	-	2,259	1,849
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	99,039	-	-	99,039	109,844
A4 Asset and investment purchases. (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	99,039	-	-	99,039	109,844
Net of receipts/(payments)	17,357	-	-	17,357	3,318
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	103,140	-	-	103,140	99,822
Cash funds this year end	120,497	-	-	120,497	103,140

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 & Bank	116,137	-	-
	Long Term Loan	4,000	-	-
	Accrual	360	-	-
	Total cash funds	120,497	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

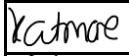

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	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
	Katie Cutmore	25/11/2024
	Neil Somerville	25/11/2024



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Colchester Operatic Society

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2024

**Charity no
(if any)**

1198865

Set out on pages

One and Two

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31 / 03 / 2024**.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed 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 (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

V Mellett

Date:

02/01/2025

Name:

Vincent Mellett

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

FCCA

Address:

122 Feering Hill, Feering

Colchester, Essex

CO5 9PY

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

COLCHESTER OPERATIC SOCIETY

England & Wales - Charity number 1198865

Accounts



Colchester Operatic Society
Registered Charity no. 1198865
15 Parkside Quarter,
Colchester,
Essex,
CO1 1EA

Annual report of the trustees for year ending 31st March 2023

Our structure and governance

Colchester Operatic Society's (also referred to as "the/our Society" and/or "COS" throughout this report) is an amateur musical theatre company (consisting of members from 11 years & over) that produce shows & concerts in Colchester for the general public. Membership is open to all aged 16yrs plus & 11-23 yrs for our youth section, providing opportunities to learn, perform & participate in local theatre. We also put on singing, acting & dancing workshops for members & the local community. We registered as a charity with the charity commission on 9th May 2022, governed by our CIO Association Constitution which refers to our charity trustees as the Executive Committee. Our youth section operates under the name CO2 (Colchester Operatic Society Second Edition) but is part of our charitable organisation.

In addition to our constitution, we have supplementary rules to govern our youth section (referred to as "CO2" throughout this report) and the following policies and procedures currently in place (these are regularly reviewed, and new policies are adopted as necessary and appropriate. All policies can be found on [our Society website](#)):

- Safeguarding Policy (updated annually in April)
- Privacy Policy (updated November 2022)
- Complaints Policy (updated September 2022)
- Conflicts of Interest Policy (updated November 2022)
- Inclusion, Equality and Diversity Policy (updated May 2021)
- Health & Safety Policy (updated April 2021)
- Social Media Policy (updated May 2021)
- Ethical Fundraising Policy (updated March 2022)
- Records Management Policy (updated November 2022)
- Cast Code of Conduct (updated April 2022)
- Volunteer Code of Conduct (updated April 2022)
- Executive Committee Code of Conduct (updated August 2022)
- Guidance on the use of ICT equipment and handling emails (updated August 2022)
- Audition Processes (updated February 2023)

Membership of the Society for 2022-2023 stood at 110 members at our last AGM (23rd June 2022) rising to 162 as we came to the end of the year. Our last AGM was attended by 28 members. Our youth section (CO2) had 38 members but many more participating in our activities throughout the year (see "purposes and activities" section below).



Our Executive Committee manages the Society and is annually elected at our AGM in June, although trustees are recruited throughout the year if Executive Committee members stand down, depending on the needs of the Society. For this year, our Executive Committee consisted of the following trustees:

Name of Trustee	Role/Office	Date acted if not for whole year
Katie Cutmore	Chair Deputy Safeguarding Lead	
Neil Somerville	Treasurer	
Amanda Powell	Secretary	Up until 23 rd June 22
Max Woodward	Secretary	Trustee for whole year but Secretary from 23 rd June 22
Sarah White	Business Manager	Up until 28 th September 22
Amy Wilson	Business Manager	From 28 th September 22
Laura Hicks	Committee Member then Assistant Secretary from 28 th July 22	
Emily Lane	Assistant Secretary	Up until 28 th July 22
Ann Taylor	Chair of CO2 (Colchester Operatic Society Second Edition: our Youth section)	Up until 2 nd November 22
Charlotte Butcher	Chair of CO2 (Colchester Operatic Society Second Edition: our Youth section) Safeguarding Lead	Chair of CO2 from 29 th November 22 (Safeguarding lead but not trustee for whole year)
Kirstie Heathcote	Co-Chair of CO2 (Colchester Operatic Society Second Edition: our Youth section)	From 29 th November to 8 th February 23
Paul Kusel-Baum	Membership Secretary Deputy safeguarding lead	Up until 28 th August 22
Claudia Haswell	Inclusion Lead	
Andrew Hodgson	Committee Member	
Jessica Bailey	Marketing & Events Lead	
Rebecca Lee	Committee Member	From 29 th November 22
Wayne Setford	Funding Co-ordinator	From 22 nd February 23

This year, we amalgamated our Executive Committee role of Membership Secretary with that of Secretary to streamline communications which has worked well. We also added a role of Funding co-ordinator. We extend thanks to all those who served as a trustee over the course of this year, without whom we could not continue our work. The Executive Committee seeks and responds to views of members and the wider public when making decisions about our activities and governs and operates the Society for public benefit, having due regard to the charity commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties, to which the guidance is relevant.



Risk Management

We hold public liability insurance and carry out risk assessments for our work and activities to manage/control any Health and Safety risks. Our Bank Account has double signatories to safeguard the charity finances and ensure money is only spent as agreed by its trustees for its purpose and associated activities.

To manage risk for our young people, we have safeguarding leads in place who ensure the wider membership, volunteers and other professionals/organisations we work with are aware of and follow our safeguarding policy. We ensure those working directly with young people are suitable to do so, are appropriately supervised and/or have clear DBS checks in place as necessary and appropriate. We also ensure DBS checked Chaperones are in place at rehearsals and performances to ensure the safety and well-being of our young members/performers.

Chair's Report

Our 98th year as Colchester Operatic Society saw our first year as a registered charity (Charitable Incorporated Organisation: CIO). We have achieved a lot this year through teamwork driven by a shared passion for musical theatre, meeting our charity's purpose and providing valuable learning experiences for all. Through producing shows and events, addressing audiences and sharing information publicly on our website and through social media we have increased the public awareness of our work and seen evidence of the difference it makes to the general public as well as those members involved in creating our productions and events.

I am very grateful to our audiences for their support in coming to see our productions and their donations towards our work. I would also like to thank PROVIDE CIC for their £2000 grant that supported us in setting up a members show fee bursary this year and contributed to rehearsal costs and captioned performance costs for our CO2 show, FAME. Thanks to this funding we have been able to award a Show fee bursary to 6 applicants over 3 of our productions (Shrek, School of Rock and Iconic) this year, which has enabled members to participate when otherwise they may not have been able to afford to. Thank you also goes to our sponsors, Ellisons Solicitors and Arc Legal Services, whose donations contributed to further captioned performances for our CO2 show, FAME, and our 2023 production of Shrek the Musical. This funding enabled us to continue to provide inclusive performances through captioning to improve access for the public to our productions.

I personally thank all trustees serving on the Executive Committee for their support, dedication, time and hard work throughout the year. We have worked hard as a team to continue to move the Society forwards, so our members and members of the future can enjoy and learn from being part of our musical theatre productions and the public can benefit from the work we create. I would also like to thank all our members for their continued support through paying membership subscriptions, taking part in our shows and events and volunteering in essential roles backstage and on all of our sub-committees. It is the continued contribution from our talented, diverse and passionate membership along with support from our audiences that will keep our Society thriving into the future.

Katie Cutmore

Chair of Colchester Operatic Society



Our purpose and activities

Our charitable purpose is to promote and improve general education in relation to all aspects of the art of drama and musical theatrical performance for the public benefit.

This year we have met this purpose through the following activities:

We produced a summer concert called “From Page to Stage”, which ran at the Headgate theatre from 8th to 11th June 2022 with a cast of 33 members performing to full houses, with audiences enjoying a varied programme of musical songs inspired by literature, which showcased the cast’s singing and dancing skills. Our concert programme available to purchase for audience members, detailed the literature which inspired each song.

This concert provided the opportunity for two of our members (Amanda Powell and Holly Bird) to direct and choreograph the show, gaining experience in these skills. They included a higher proportion of dance in this concert than we have traditionally had in previous summer concerts, which meant many cast members participating were able to develop and enhance their dance skills. We hired a local creative (Phil Toms) to musically direct the show, who provided cast members further learning opportunities as he shared his musical skills and expertise when teaching them the harmonies and music. Cast members rehearsed over a 4 month period leading up to the concert, learning songs, harmonies and choreography ready for the public to experience as audience members.

In July 2022, we held a backstage meet and greet open to the public, advertised through social media, our website and e-mailshots, to recruit more volunteers to help with and learn about the vital backstage roles we need to continue producing shows. We had members who have been part of our backstage crews before and new members of the public attending. Those new to the Society who attended took up the opportunity to volunteer backstage in productions this year and gained experience and education in what is involved behind the scenes in creating musical theatre productions.

In July we also held pre-audition workshops for our production Shrek the Musical, which were open to the public, followed by auditions for those interested in joining as members and performing in the show. The casting needs of the show meant we advertised for children to audition and held specific workshops for children aged 8-14 years old to learn a song and dance from the show and prepare for auditions, learning performing and auditioning skills. Following auditions, we cast 44 members, which included 8 new members to the Society and 4 children (aged 8-10 years old). Rehearsals began in September running through to the production in January (see later for more information).

In August we ran a stall, and a small group of members performed a small set of songs on the main stage, at Colchester pride for the first time, promoting our Society and the work we do to members of the public attending the event (which comprised of a high proportion of the local LGBTQ+ community), making links with other community



organisations and making further progress on our Inclusion, Equality and Diversity strategy by increasing awareness of our work to a more diverse community.

We had 38 CO2 members (aged 11-23) participate in our CO2 production of FAME this year, with rehearsals running over a 6-month period from March 2022 through to the performances at the Mercury Theatre, Colchester from 8th to 18th September 2022. We hired local creatives (Richard Harrison as musical director and Charlie Morgan as director) who supported and educated our young members throughout the rehearsal and production process, giving them the opportunity to develop skills in acting, singing and dancing. Audiences were then able to enjoy their performances, with the show selling 53% over the whole run. Programmes with more information about the show and our Society were available to purchase for audience members. One of our cast members spoke to the audiences at the end of each show to raise awareness of the work we do, future work we have coming up and ways they can support us through donations, raising £2062.83, which helped meet our production costs. We provided two captioned performances of the show increasing accessibility to our work for the public. Many of our adult membership supported backstage during the show run of FAME, joining some of our newer volunteers, all developing skills and gaining experience in the hidden elements of musical theatre that go on behind the scenes to make the magic happen on stage for audiences.

On Saturday 17th September we held a COS sing-along in the bar at the Mercury Theatre after a performance of FAME, as part of the Mercury Lates programme. This was free to members of the public to attend and participate in and comprised of singing freely along with a variety of musical theatre songs, accompanied on the piano by our Treasurer, Neil Somerville, a skilled musical director who provided this service for free.

In December, we organised a group of our members, including some of the cast of our production of Shrek the Musical, to participate and lead carol singing outside of the Mercury Theatre and at a local pub, the Swan in Chappell. Members of the public watched and were encouraged to join in with the singing and we were able to promote our upcoming production of Shrek the Musical to those who wanted to know more about our work.

We produced “Shrek the Musical”, which was performed by our cast of 44 members at the Mercury Theatre, Colchester from 26th January to 4th February 2023. We hired local creatives (Neil Somerville as musical director, Adam Woodhouse as director and Laura Hicks as assistant director) who directed and supported our talented cast throughout the 6-month rehearsal and production process as they utilised and developed their singing, acting and dancing skills. Many cast members had never been in a musical theatre production before so along with learning performance skills, they learnt about all aspects of what it takes to put on a large-scale musical theatre production. This show required fairy-tale costumes and make up including prosthetics for some of the characters including the main character, Shrek. We recruited a volunteer who had a degree in theatrical make-up and was able to create her own prosthetics. She did so for free to gain the experience of getting back into theatrical make-up/prosthetic work, following a break in her career due to the pandemic. She was also able to provide learning opportunities and experience for a team of volunteers supporting her, including



some of our members, during the production run. Including our make-up/prosthetics team, we had one of the largest backstage teams we've had for one of our shows, with 54 people (in addition to the cast) volunteering at varying times during the run, including many of our CO2 members. Those volunteering backstage reported how much they had enjoyed the experience and learnt from it. For example, one CO2 member told us *"Having that new insight into how a show works—it's really eye-opening and it's important as a young performer to not only be aware of the things that happen on stage, but also have a knowledge and appreciation of what's going on behind the scenes."*

We provided two captioned performances of the show, again increasing accessibility to our work for the public. Our talented cast performed to nearly full houses with 98% of tickets being sold across the production run, with standing ovations every night and great audience reactions and reviews. This included reviews that recognised our continued inclusive approach to producing and casting our shows: *"Tonight I saw a brilliantly talented performer who uses a motorised wheelchair, cast in a role they excelled in. This is something you just wouldn't see in a professional musical (outside of the National Theatre)."* Mickey-Jo, Twitter. Recognition of the public benefit of this production was noted in the North Essex Theatre Guild review (NETG) of the show: *"Your talent and hard work ensured that there were hundreds of people that experienced fun and laughter and were totally entertained"* which also sums up the production beautifully. One of our cast members spoke to audiences at the end of each performance to continue to raise awareness of the work we do as a charity and ways they can support us through donations, raising £1004.53, which helped meet our production costs. In addition to this we included information on how we work and how members of the public can support us, on our promotional fliers and in our programmes on sale to audience members during the show. Our programmes also contained information about the show, the cast and our Society.

On Saturday 28th January, we held a further COS sing-along in the bar at the Mercury Theatre after a performance of Shrek, as part of the Mercury Lates programme. This was free to members of the public to attend and participate in and comprised of singing freely along with a variety of musical theatre songs, accompanied on the piano by our Treasurer, Neil Somerville, a skilled musical director who provided this service for free.

We also provided a further free benefit to the public by holding a Shrek cast meet and greet for audiences on our Sunday matinee (29th January 2023), with cast in costume and in character, talking to audiences/members of the public in the bar after the show and this was well attended by young children (and their parents) who had watched the show. We witnessed several children and adults with additional learning needs participating in this experience getting enormous benefit from it which was in turn rewarding for our members taking part.

After Shrek, we moved onto auditions for our next summer concert "Iconic", which is set to take place at the Headgate Theatre 14th to 17th June 2023. We saw evidence that our production of Shrek had succeeded in raising awareness to the public, when new members joining our concert cast, cited seeing our production of Shrek as one of the reasons they got involved. We also received emails from members of the public asking



to get involved behind the scenes and through this we have recruited a new costume lead for the next CO2 production (see information below).

In March we had 122 young people (aged 9 to 23 years old) attend our singing, acting and dancing pre-audition workshops for our next CO2 production of School Of Rock, set for October 2023. This resulted in 45 young people (aged 9 to 19 years old) being cast for the show, with rehearsals starting at the end of March, led by hired creatives, Ashton Moore as musical director and Laura Hicks and Leah Scott as co-directors. We had correspondence from the parents of some of the young people who attended the workshops but did not get cast, thanking us for the experience during the workshops, evidencing how much they learnt from it.

Plans for the future

Looking forwards, our summer concert cast continue to rehearse leading up to the performances at the Headgate Theatre from 14th to 17th June. We are set to hold auditions for our next production, My Fair Lady on the 16th July (with pre-auditions on 3rd and 10th July). We have hired creatives to lead and support our future cast with Claire Carr as director, Holly Bird as assistant director and Geoff Osborne as musical director. It will run at the Mercury Theatre from 25th January to 4th February 2024. Our CO2 production, School of Rock will continue with rehearsals culminating in the show run at the Mercury Theatre from 5th to 8th October 2023.

Financial report

Colchester Operatic Society's principal source of funding is ticket sales from our productions and events. In addition to this we receive income from membership subscriptions and show fees for members who are cast in a production. We fundraise for donations throughout the year and apply for funding/grants and sponsorship, adhering to our ethical fundraising policy and ensuring any funds raised will be used for the public benefit and do not compromise the independent status of Colchester Operatic Society. This year our income was **£113,161.43**, which included:

- Membership subscriptions of £1120.00
- Income for "From Page to Stage" of £4,045.00
- Income for "FAME" of £31,693.15 (this included £2062.83 of audience donations, £350 sponsorship for captioning from Ellisons Solicitors and previous income of £2770.47)
- Donations of £1151.34 across the year (not accounted for in specific shows)
- Income for "Shrek" of £69,488.95 (this included £1004.53 of audience donations, Sponsorship from Arc Legal Services (Amtrust) for Captioned performances of £750 and £500 previous income)
- Advance income from members participating in our upcoming concert "Iconic" of £1125
- Income from pre-audition workshops for our upcoming CO2 show "School of Rock" of £2300
- Income from Ellisons Solicitors for captioning and signing performances of "Hunchback of Notre Dame" (our 2022 show) of £1000



- Income from programmes for “Hunchback of Notre Dame” (our 2022 show) of £1116.00
- Bank Interest of £81.99

This year our total Expenditure was **£109,843.85**. This has been spent on activities and work to meet our charitable purpose as described above and detailed below.

- We hire a secure storage unit for our physical assets (including, but not limited to, props, costumes, set/furniture pieces, electronic equipment, music stands and instruments). This has cost £1097.00 this financial year.
- We pay for website and email hosting. This has cost £171.44 this financial year.
- As a charity we were able to gain subscription to Office 365 for our trustees and to Canva pro for members of our Marketing team for free this year.
- We hire venues to rehearse and perform in and to host workshops and other Society events, such as our AGM and occasionally other social events.
- A majority of our work is done by volunteers giving their time and skills for free but this is supplemented by hiring professionals in key roles, such as our creative teams, sound and lighting designers and other technical specialists, who enable us to provide higher-quality productions for the public benefit and from whom our volunteers and members learn from whilst participating in these productions.
- Hiring and/or purchasing scenery, materials, costumes, wigs, make-up/prosthetics and props for our productions.
- Licencing fees for performing specific productions and hire of rehearsal materials and orchestra scores.
- Miscellaneous administration fees including printing and postage as necessary.
- General costs for marketing to promote our productions and events to the public. This year we attended and performed at Colchester Pride paying for a stall to promote our work to those in attendance and have paid to have the same stall at next year’s events (costs coming within the same financial year), costing £135.00.
- We pay to print programmes for audience members to provide information on our productions and educate them in the work we do.
- Captioning performances to make them accessible to a wider public audience (This has cost £2005 for our productions in this financial year).
- Collectively expenses (that include the above) for each of our productions this financial year are as follows:
 - “Hunchback of Notre Dame” (our 2022 show): £408.00
 - “From Page to Stage”: £2431.58
 - “FAME”: £41,369.44 (this includes £1005 for captioning as detailed above)
 - “Shrek”: £59,040.45 (this includes £1000 for captioning as detailed above)
 - “Iconic” (our upcoming 2023 concert): £1557.64
 - “School of Rock” (our upcoming 2023 CO2 production): £2221.20
- Expenses for our AGM this year, including administration costs, hiring a venue and presentations of thanks/achievement to individuals involved in our work has cost £182.40 this financial year.
- In addition to ensure we comply with our legal responsibilities we purchase public liability insurance at £606.19. We also employ accountants to audit our accounts annually and support us with our tax return to ensure we are managing our funds



responsibly and transparently. These audited accounts are reported in detail to members annually. This has cost £360.00 this financial year.

- Other miscellaneous administrative expenses not already detailed above (which includes our membership to wider amateur theatre organisations including NODA (National Operatic and Dramatic Association) and NETG (North Essex Theatre Guild)) cost £263.51 this financial year.

Overall, this year we made a **surplus of £3317.58**.

As our predominant income is from ticket sales, we do always see a fluctuation from year to year on surplus/deficit. Our aim is to continue to provide local musical theatre experiences for the public to participate in, watch and learn from and therefore we are not driven to make profit and accept that some productions will make losses whilst others will make profits. This balances out across the years and the trustees work hard to ensure we maintain sufficient reserves to continue our work into the future.

We hold reserves so we are able to pay upfront for future production and event costs and meet ongoing annual costs such as public liability insurance, administration costs, costs to maintain an online presence and costs to securely store and maintain (including repair and replace as necessary) our physical assets. We produce several shows throughout the year, with costs being incurred concurrently and in advance. For example, a 2-week production at the Mercury Theatre, costs around £90,000, with many of these costs being incurred before we receive any income from ticket sales.

On 31st March 2023, Colchester Operatic Society held £103,139.96 in reserve.

The Colchester Officers Club (another local organisation, who we had a close working relationship with) hold £5000 of these financial assets, which was loaned to them in 2008. We have recently called in this loan and are negotiating a repayment plan.

Unfortunately, ticket sales for FAME at 53% meant we did not meet our costs for this show, despite raising £2062.83 in audience donations and having some funding from the PROVIDE CIC grant and previous sponsorship for captioned performances. Whilst the pandemic and costs of living crisis has contributed to the current challenges in achieving the required % ticket sales for any production, the Executive Committee had noted that CO2 shows over many years have not always managed to meet costs, especially since they have run for 2 weeks and earlier in the year in September. This led to some challenging discussions around future shows for CO2 and where/when they might take place. Following investigation into different venues and frank discussions with The Mercury Theatre, we were able to secure dates for October 2023, making the decision to produce the next CO2 show “School of Rock” for one week rather than two.

When we got into the theatre for our production of Shrek, we were at 77% sales (not quite enough to meet our costs) but this rose to 83% on opening night and by the end of the show run we had 98% tickets sold with many performances being sold out. This was a fantastic achievement and meant we met our costs and made a small surplus, going some way to cover previous losses during productions in our previous financial year and



FAME. However, despite such great sales, £500 sponsorship for our captioned performances from Arc Legal Services, programme sales, increased show fees for cast members taking part and £1004.53 in audience donations, the surplus is small and although we ended the year with a small surplus overall, this was not enough to cover the deficit from the previous financial year. The rising costs of staging such large high-quality productions means we need high % ticket sales to break-even so it's vital we have continued support through other funding avenues such as sponsorship, grants and donations and this applies to any production going forwards. In particular to continue providing inclusive performances (for example, captioned and/or signed performances), which come at a cost, extra funding through sponsorship, donations and/or grants is needed.

The trustees will continue to monitor the charity's finances and adapt the activities we carry out accordingly to secure its continued running, even through challenging financial climates. If the required ticket sales for large-scale productions continue to be difficult to achieve we will reflect on production choices, venues used and dates productions are planned for, adapting as necessary and as funds allow.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

COLCHESTER OPERATIC SOCIETY	1198865
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Receipts and payments accounts



CC16a

For the period from	01/04/2022	To	31/03/2023
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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					
Voluntary Income	111,928	-	-	111,928	50,682
Donations	1,151	-	-	1,151	-
Bank Interest	82	-	-	82	10
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	113,161	-	-	113,161	50,692
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	113,161	-	-	113,161	50,692
A3 Payments					
Charitable Activities	107,028	-	-	107,028	61,328
Accountancy Cost	360	-	-	360	360
Insurance	606	-	-	606	606
Admin Costs	1,849	-	-	1,849	3,857
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	109,844	-	-	109,844	66,151
A4 Asset and investment purchases. (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	109,844	-	-	109,844	66,151
Net of receipts/(payments)	3,318	-	-	3,318	- 15,459
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	99,822	-	-	99,822	115,281
Cash funds this year end	103,140	-	-	103,140	99,823

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 & Bank	97,780	-	-
	Long Term Loan	5,000	-	-
	Accrual	360	-	-
	Total cash funds	103,140	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
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 asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		Katie Cutmore	11/11/2023	
		Neil Somerville	13/11/2023	



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Colchester Operatic Society

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2023

**Charity no
(if any)**

1198865

Set out on pages

ONE and TWO

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31 / 03 / 2023**.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed 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 (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

V. Mellett

Date:

4-12-23

Name:

VINCENT MELLETT

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

ACCA

Address:

122 Feering Hill, Feering,

Colchester, Essex

CO5 9PY

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.