

Registered number
CE001171
Charity Number: 1156432

**City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra
(Previously known as The Symphonis Verbum Orchestra)
Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

Report and Accounts

18 May 2025

City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra
Financial Statements
for the period ended 18 May 2025

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**City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra
Charity Reference and Administrative Details
for the period ended 18 May 2025**

Trustees

Lucy Elizabeth Moss (Chair)
Christine Margaret Halliday
Sandra May Hearson
Brian George Rawlins (Appointed on 23rd of January 2025)
Victoria Jane Thornton (Appointed on 24th of January 2025)

Accountants

Protax Consultants Ltd
Lombard Business Park
8 Lombard House
Wimbledon
SW19 3TZ

Registered office

Crotchety Cottage
Martin Moss Lane
Smallwood
Cheshire
CW11 2UW

Registered number

CE029017

**City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra
Trustees' Annual Report
for the period ended 18 May 2025**

The trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the period ended 18 May 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared on the accruals basis and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standards. The financial statements have been prepared on the accruals basis and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standards applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland published on October 2019 (second edition).

Trustees of the charity

The directors of the charitable incorporated organisation are its trustees for the purposes of charity law. The trustees who have served during the year and since the year end are named on page 1.

Name, registered office and registration number of the charity

The full name of the Charity is City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra

The legal registration details are :-

The Registered Office is	Crotchety Cottage Martin Moss Lane Cheshire CW11 2UW
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Charity Registration Number	1199023
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Objectives and activities

The City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra (CSSO) is active in and around Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire and Cheshire. The Orchestra delivers regular public concerts, and outreach events such as relaxed performance and hospital visits.

The CSSO is dedicated to engaging and educating as wide and diverse an audience as possible and has a strong focus on making classical music accessible and desirable as possible for everybody. We believe passionately that experiencing live music improves health, wellbeing and can also positively impact academic achievements and are therefore committed to enabling people from all backgrounds to have such experiences.

The Charity is governed by its Constitution. Its objects are:

- to promote, advance, improve and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of Music in all its aspects through the presentation of public concerts, the provision of educational and other community engagement programmes and other projects, and by such other ways as the CIO through its trustees shall determine from time to time.
- to advance the education of the public in the subject of Music.

The trustees have had regard to CC/CCNIs guidance on public benefit.

**City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra
Trustees' Annual Report
for the period ended 18 May 2025**

Achievements and performance

Throughout the past year, the orchestra has continued to nurture and strengthen its community links within Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire and Cheshire. Driving forward with its aim of providing opportunities to experience high quality events - including concerts and outreach projects. We started the 2024/25 season as The Symphonia Verbum Orchestra (SVO) but officially became The City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra (CSSO) in January 2025. For the purposes of clarity within this report, the name CSSO will be used.

CSSO started the 2024/25 season in October 2024 with a concert titled 'Around the British Isles', celebrating the rich musical heritage of the British Isles. It included works by Hoddinot, Grace Williams, Stanford, Coleridge-Taylor and ended with Bruch's Scottish Fantasy, violin solo performed by James Warburton. The concert as usual was very well received by the audience with significant positive feedback. For the first time at our concerts we hosted a pre-concert and interval reception, where trustees, valued supporters, invited guests including the Lord Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent and prospective new trustees were invited. This was a huge success and led to many positive conversations and leads to follow up. Also, at our October 2024 concert it was announced that we were going to officially relaunch and rebrand as the City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra, the announcement was well received. Work was started with local marketing company Limelight Marketing and Communications Ltd to rebrand the orchestra.

Following the success of our October concert Paul Williams, chair of Stoke-on-Trent's Cultural Destinations Partnership published an article in the Sentinel supporting our hope to capture 'made in Stoke-on-Trent spirit of creativity and cultural diversity'. He identified that a successful professional orchestra can be an essential component of Stoke-on-Trent's dynamic cultural offering and provide a platform for a new generation to discover classical music.

Towards the end of November CSSO were asked by Stoke-on-Trent City Centre BID to provide festive music at The Potteries Shopping Centre to celebrate the arrival of the festive season with a brass quartet playing traditional carols and woodwind quartet playing a mix of classic Christmas tunes.

January 2025 saw the orchestra officially become The City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra (CSSO), voted unanimously by the trustees, with relevant changes made to the constitution and the Charity Commission informed. In January we also welcomed two new trustees on board. Victoria Thornton, who joins us with a wealth of educational and community music experience and Brian Rawlins who amongst other things is our official link to the Press.

March 2025 was a very busy month for CSSO. The University of Staffordshire very kindly hosted our second relaxed performance again generously funded by JCB. Whilst a completely free event it was ticketed and to our delight was sold out. Invitations were sent out to care homes, community centres and special schools. It was very well received with talks taking place about the possibility of future collaborations with the university and some of the organisations that were present. The relaxed performance was an opportunity to share our new branding and launch the new website.

**City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra
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Also in March 2025 CSSO held a hugely successful 'Out and About' Festival in Hanley, funded by City of Stoke-on-Trent, UK government with additional support from Stoke-on-Trent City Centre BID, who provided much needed seating and additional manpower over the weekend. Across the 22nd-23rd March CSSO performed at venues around Hanley, on the Saturday smaller groups performed in various locations throughout the day. Early afternoon a String Quartet and Brass Quintet performed, later in the afternoon a Wind Quintet and Brass Detect took over. On the Sunday a full symphony orchestra set up in the Potteries Shopping Centre set up, they performed film classics including Star Wars, ET, and Back to the Future. It attracted a large crowd with incredible feedback, for many it was the first time they had heard live classical music, they were converted having thought 'it wasn't for them'. By chance the shopping centre was also holding a Comicon event so we even had Star Wars characters come and join us and lend a lightsaber to use for conducting!

On June 5th 2025 CSSO took part in events celebrating the first ever Stoke-on-Trent Day, celebrating 100 years of city status. The day began at King's Hall providing music for the Civic Prayer Breakfast and spent the rest of the day at Royal Stoke Hospital and Stafford Hospital providing music throughout the day in various wards.

Our 2024/25 season officially ended with our 'Stoke 100' Celebration prom and official launch of the orchestra's new name and branding. The programme included a world premiere by local composer Eden Longson titled SIXTOWNS – representing the six towns that make up Stoke-on-Trent. Jordan Harding sang with the orchestra and our leader Laura Embrey also performed with the orchestra. The concert ended in typical prom fashion with the Sailor's Hornpipe and Auld Lang Syne. The King's Hall was nearly full, and the audience were enthusiastic and helped create a celebratory atmosphere. There were a great many 'first-timers' there which was fantastic to see, and we'll hopefully see them again. Feedback was fantastic, a few examples given: 'A great blend of traditional English and foreign composers.', 'I'm looking forward to seeing what the orchestra goes on to do in the future.', and 'I'm so proud to have been part of the audience and experience such a great quality of music!'

We are grateful to Mike Lloyd for his support in promoting our June concert through Music Mania. We are looking forward to building on this partnership over the coming year.

Throughout July and August CSSO have provided smaller music groups in collaboration and for community projects in Staffordshire. In July, a Brass Quintet was provided at the Regent Theatre for Stoke-on-Trent's Youth Celebration Day, a project led by the YMCA North Staffordshire, University of Staffordshire and Keele University.

In August members of CSSO spent two Thursdays with members of the Dementia and Creativity Group at the New Vic Theatre. They took the members on a musical and imaginative journey through the four seasons complete with sights, sounds, smells and of course music associated with each time of year.

Finally for this season the CSSO Brass Quintet played at the Picadilly Stage in Hanley as part of this year's Big Feast an event held by Appetite.

**City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra
Trustees' Annual Report
for the period ended 18 May 2025**

We are incredibly grateful for the support and funding given to us by Stoke-on-Trent Council, Stoke BID, Vaughan Williams Foundation, The Community Foundation for Staffordshire, The Pitfield Trust and the Ida Carroll Trust, without the support of these organisations our concerts and events would not be able to take place.

As well as the generous donation from Lord Bamford at JCB we have continued to be supported by Dave & Lucy Moss, Christine Halliday, Sandra Hearson, Valerie Langfield and Linda Carrington. Confirmation of ongoing support is appreciated and helps us to plan for the future.

We are always seeking sponsorship opportunities and have actively approached several local businesses which will be an ongoing process.

Financial Review

The statement of financial activities for the year ended is set out on the receipts and payments account.

The trustees are optimistic that the following years will generate more net incoming resources.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a charitable incorporated organisation and was registered on the 19th of May 2023.

The trustees who served during the period are detailed on page 1. The current trustees decide on the appointment of new trustees. New trustees are proposed by the existing trustees and are appointed at Annual General Meeting. The Chair is Lucy Elizabeth Moss.

Future developments

Our 2025/26 season opens in October with a concert titled Serenade for Strings, a celebration of some of the best-loved music for string orchestra.

In March Myths & Mysticism comes to King's Hall taking us from ancient shores to enchanted palaces.

Music from the Movies ends the season in June with music from Indiana Jones to Psycho, the CSSO presents Hollywood's greatest scores live in concert!

For the first time ever, we are pleased to be offering a discounted season ticket for all our Kings Hall concerts.

Reserve policy

The policy of the trustees is to continue to maintain unrestricted reserves at a reasonable level to fulfil the objects of the Charity and allow it to make support in the following year. The trustees have decided that the Charity should have minimum reserves of £2,000.

City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra
Trustees' Annual Report
for the period ended 18 May 2025

Trustees' responsibilities

The trustees of The Symphonia Verbum Orchestra, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with Charities Act 2011.

Law applicable to Charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those accounts, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the accounts;

and

- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is appropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report was approved by the board on/11/2025 and signed on its behalf.

x 

Lucy Elizabeth Moss
Trustee

City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra

Independent examiners' report

Report to the trustees on the preparation of the unaudited statutory accounts of City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra for the period ended 18 May 2025

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the requirement of section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) does not apply, and that an independent examination is needed. The charity gross income exceeded £25,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of ACCA. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts under section 145 of the Act and to State, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act 2011; and state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

As a practising member firm of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, we are subject to its ethical and other professional requirements which are detailed at <http://rulebook.accaglobal.com/>

Basis of Independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - (a) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - (b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act.

have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Protax Consultants Ltd
Chartered Certified Accountants & Registered Auditors
Lombard Business Park
G18, 8 Lombard Road
Wimbledon
SW19 3TZ

...../11/2025

City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra**Profit and Loss Account****For the period year ended 18 May 2025***This schedule does not form part of the statutory accounts*


	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Income			
Total Income from charitable activities	1	<u>50,276</u>	<u>35,800</u>
Charitable expenditure			
Charitable expenses	2	<u>34,289</u>	<u>19,208</u>
Legal and professional costs:			
Accountancy fees		1,320	1,175
Administrative expenses		14,601	6,877
Profit		<u><u>66</u></u>	<u><u>8,540</u></u>

City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra
Statement of assets and liabilities as at 18 May 2025

	2025		2024
	£		£
Current assets			
Debtors	257		-
Cash at bank and in hand	10,603		10,734
	<u>10,860</u>		<u>10,734</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(1,260)		(1,200)
	<u>9,600</u>		<u>9,534</u>
Net current assets			
	<u>9,600</u>		<u>9,534</u>
Net assets			
	<u>9,600</u>		<u>9,534</u>
Charity funds			
Unrestricted funds	9,600		9,534
	<u>9,600</u>		<u>9,534</u>
Total charity funds			
	<u>9,600</u>		<u>9,534</u>

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees.

x 

Lucy Elizabeth Moss
Trustee (Chair)
 11/2025

CIO registration number: CE029017

The Symphonia Verbum Orchestra
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the period from 1 June 2024 to 18 May 2025

1 Income	2024	2023
	£	£
Corporate sponsorship	5,250	5,000
Gift Aid	8,538	-
Donations for concerts and other donations	18,666	23,640
Fees generated from concert (tickets sale)	17,822	5,570
Fees generated from workshop	-	500
Grants income	-	1,090
	<u>50,276</u>	<u>35,800</u>

2 Charitable Expenditure	2023
	£
Concert fees and other donations	17,640
Workshop fees	1,568
	<u>19,208</u>