



Friends of the Vox  
promoting new music around the world

## **Friends of the Vox Trustee Report 2023/2024**

Friends of the Vox was established for the public benefit, to advance, improve, develop, and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of choral music. Friends of the Vox is passionate about the power of choral music to unite people from all walks of life. We strive to make a tangible difference in our local community and to foster connections on a global scale. Through our local initiatives, global connections, and the remarkable performances of our choirs, we aspire to make a difference in the lives of individuals and communities. We firmly believe in the transformative power of choral music, and hope that you will join us to support our vision. Together we can nurture a passionate and thriving musical community.

### **2023/2024 season performance review**

The 2023/2024 season has seen Friends of the Vox continue to build community through choral music and this year we have reached a worldwide audience. Alongside the regular local concerts, the Emerging Composer initiative and collaboration with new choirs has seen our reach extend across the UK and overseas too.

### **Friends of the Vox Charity Launch Party and Christmas Fundraiser.**

In December 2023, following a wonderful joint Christmas concert between Vox Populi and Vox Anima Chamber Choir, many of our choir and audience members travelled the short distance to Mereworth Winery to officially launch the charity.

We were delighted to be joined by so many people at this event. As well as an opportunity to thank our supporters, the night was also a chance for us to share our vision, as well as to talk about how we have already been making a change within the choral world. We heard from our Chair of the Trustees, Laura Cloke, our Artistic Advisor, James Meaders, and from music teacher and Vox Anima Chamber Choir's accompanist, Richard Hammond-Hall.

What was clear through these speeches was how much the charity has already achieved – multiple concerts within the local community, an American tour by one of the charity's choirs, hosting an American choir in Kent, providing outreach opportunities to local school children, commissioning new music to be written, and performing and collaborating with many professional musicians!

### **Emerging Composers 2024**

In January 2024, we launched our inaugural competition for emerging composers in collaboration with the generous support of the Music of Dan Forrest. We invited composers to submit a new work to Friends of the Vox, to be adjudicated by James Meaders (Founder and Artistic Director, Vox Anima London) and Dan Forrest (Composer). The title "Emerging Composers" was chosen to allow potential participants to "self-select" enabling us to reach a larger cross-section of the composer population. The winning piece 'O Oriens' by Anna Ročławska-Musiałczyk explores the "O Oriens" Antiphon, traditionally sung in the Catholic

Church on December 21, the shortest day of the year, and which speaks of God as the Rising Sun. The top three winning pieces selected by the adjudicators will be recorded by Vox Anima Chamber choir in May 2025. This recording will act as a platform for the emerging composers allowing their music to reach wider audiences locally and internationally.

### **Workshop at Surbiton High School**

Artistic Advisor, James Meaders, led a workshop for students at Surbiton High School, supported by singers from Vox Anima Chamber Choir. Together, they explored “Everyday Wonders: The Girl from Aleppo” before being joined by composer Cecilia McDowall. This session was in preparation for the choirs to take part in an International Women’s Day concert at Cadogan Hall in March 2024.

### **The Mancunium Consort Summer Tour in Kent**

We were pleased to support the promotion of “The Mancunium Consort’s” Summer Tour in Kent. Led by Harry Mobbs, who grew up in Tonbridge, Kent, they are a new and dynamic vocal ensemble. We can’t wait to hear more from this exciting group.

### **Vox Anima Chamber Choir**

The chamber choir has continued to grow and develop its sound, taking part in three concerts across the year. ‘What delights me’ at St Dunstan’s Church in Cranbrook in November 2023 focused around “Everyday Wonders: The Girl from Aleppo” by Cecilia McDowall. In December the chamber choir joined Vox Populi for a Christmas concert, featuring the commissioned piece ‘In the Bleak Midwinter’ by Dan Forrest. In July 2024, the chamber choir returned to St Dunstan’s Church in Cranbrook to perform ‘Fly Higher’, a concert which featured a wide range of music from contemporary female composers and lyricists. Following the concert the choir had a weekend retreat at Frasers Barn, Egerton, which included reflecting on the last year, setting goals for the future, and singing together in a beautiful countryside setting.

### **Vox Populi**

In 2023-2024 Vox Populi performed in 3 concerts, with some singers also participating in a concert at St John’s Smith Square, London. Repertoire has focused on larger works by contemporary composers including Dan Forrest, Sarah MacDonald, and Heather Sorensen. Vox Populi also collaborated with St Mary’s Church in West Malling, performing a joint concert with their Church Choir, Treblemakers (a music group for children), and the Choral Scholars. The Charity supported several singers who were unable to pay subscriptions to sing with Vox Populi.

### **Charity updates**

The Trustees decided to engage the services of a consultant to enable the aims of the Charity to be advanced. This role has proved invaluable to the charity as it seeks to establish itself and much of the work this year would not have been possible without it. Hannah

Pinney-Thomson created a website, further developed the brand identity, and set up systems and processes to allow the charity to function in an efficient and professional way. Hannah secured a grant from the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust which allowed a significant concert to be arranged in December 2024 (concert report on next year's Trustee Report). One trustee position remains open, and the board is assessing the skill set and person specification needed before recruiting into this role.

## **Funding**

It has been identified that core choir activity is covered by our current funding model (subscriptions by members and sponsorship for the chamber choir) but to deliver bigger projects, additional funding is required. A donation from The Music of Dan Forrest (which was received as a direct result of the launch party) allowed the Emerging Composer initiative to be delivered. A similar sponsor will be sought for any such activity in the future.

The Vox Anima Chamber Choir sponsorship programme continues to be successful. All donors were thanked for their support in the 2023/2024 season and have been asked to continue to support the chamber choir for 2024/2025. Some new sponsors have been acquired and the choir and charity are continually looking for new opportunities to raise money.

The board are reviewing running costs, recognising that it is important to pay commercial rates for all professional musicians involved, and are developing a strategy to ensure we can meet these increased fundraising needs over the next 5 years.

Anthony Royle of Royle Accounting gave an independent review of the charity accounts. He had a full view of the charity bank statements, cashbook, and invoices for the year and was able to do an independent review as required by the Charity Commission. His report:-

1. All bank items have been included in Income and Expenses.
2. Opening and closing balances agree to bank statements
3. Change on bank agrees to net income & expenses for year

Anthony was thanked for his review which he donated free of charge.

## **Board of Trustees as at January 2025**

Chair - Laura Cloke

Secretary - Cathy Booth

Treasurer - Alexandra Meaders

Member - Becky Clifford

Member – Simon Fowler

Artistic advisor - James Meaders

Development consultant - Hannah Pinney-Thomson (up to February 2025) and Laura Fowler (from February 2025).

**Report written by Laura Cloke – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**Friends of the Vox** (reg'd charity 1200317)  
**Income and Expenses from 1 September 2023 - 31 August 2024**

	Income		Expenses	
Vox Populi				
	Subs 2023 - 2024	£4,977.87	General expenses	-£700.33
	General fundraising	£0.00	Accompanist	-£1,920.00
			Rehearsal venue	-£1,040.00
	Dec 2023 concert	£1,076.45	Dec 2023 concert	-£1,251.40
	May 2024 concert	£906.02	May 2024 concert	-£400.00
		£6,960.34		-£5,311.73
Vox Anima Chamber Choir				
	Subs 2023 - 2024	£2,280.00	General expenses	-£2,939.97
	Sponsorship	£2,300.00	Accompanist	-£1,520.00
	General income	£650.00		
	Nov 2023 concert	£1,339.46	Nov 2023 concert	-£781.20
	July 2024 concert	£680.01	July 2024 concert	-£557.50
	July 2024 Retreat	£2,000.00	July 2024 Retreat	-£3,190.00
		£9,249.47		-£8,988.67
FotV general				
	Income	£3,926.65	Expenses	-£4,847.05
	FoTV launch party	£1,187.22	FoTV launch party	-£1,036.93
	Upper Voices Festival Nov 2024	£2,100.00	Upper Voices Festival Nov 2024	£0.00
	Composition Competition	£1,755.61		
	Joint VP / VACC HGS Dec 2024 concert	£1,700.00	Joint VP / VACC HGS Dec 2024 concert	-£1,035.87
		£10,669.48		-£6,919.85
			Monthly Payments to J Meaders	-£4,200.00

Current account balance		£9,948.29	Opening balance	£8,489.25
Uncleared		£0.00	Monthly payments to Meaders	-£4,200.00
			FoTV I/E in year	£3,749.63
			VP I/E in year	£1,648.61
			VACC I/E in year	£260.80
<b>Total</b>		<b>£9,948.29</b>		<b>£9,948.29</b>
Split of funds				
	FoTV	£6,104.97		
	Vox Populi	£753.33		
	VACC	£3,089.99		
		<b>£9,948.29</b>		
Restricted funds				
	FoTV	£2,100.00 (Upper Voices festival)		
	FoTV	£1,755.61 (Composition competition)		
	FoTV	£664.13 (D'Oyly Cart Grant for Dec 2024 concert)		
	Vox Populi	£0.00		
	VACC	£1,214.24 (McDowall Commission balance)		
<b>Available funds</b>				
	FoTV	<b>£1,585.23</b>		
	Vox Populi	<b>£753.33</b>		
	VACC	<b>£1,875.75</b>		



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name

FRIENDS of the Vox

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 AUGUST 2024

Charity no  
(if any)

1200317

Set out on pages

SUMMARY of EXPENSES & Income 31/08/24

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/08/2024

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of applicable listed body]]. Delete [ ] if not applicable.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination ~~(other than that disclosed below \*)~~ which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report 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:

Date:

3/3/2025

Name:

Anthony Royle (Royle Accounting Ltd)

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body

(if any):

Address: DUTCH HOUSE  
NEW ROMNEY  
TN28 8QZ

## Section B

### Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material 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.