

The Capricorn Singers

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT an Annual General Meeting will be held at St Andrew's Church in Cleveleys on Wednesday 5th February 2025 at 8:30pm to transact the following business: -

1. Receive apologies for absence.
2. Read the Notice convening the Meeting.
3. Confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 24th January 2024.
4. Deal with any matters arising on the Minutes.
5. Read the 2024 Annual Report.
6. Adopt the Balance Sheet for the 12 months ending 31st December 2024.
7. Confirm the Member Subscription rate for 2025.
8. Elect Members of the Committee and Trustees for the year 2025.
9. To deal with any other business which the Meeting is competent to transact.

2024 Annual Report

CHOIR COMMITTEE

The Secretary of the Committee Debbie La Gette was elected at the January 2024 AGM and there were no other changes to Committee Members this year. All six committee members became Trustees of the Charity.

During 2024, the choir committee consisted of:

- Norma Woodward (Chairman)
- Debbie La Gette (Secretary)
- Susan Ansell (Treasurer)
- Dawn Yeoman (Assistant Treasurer)
- Janet Heald (Events & Bookings Co-ordinator)
- Chrissie Mason (Musical Director; unelected)

Assistant Treasurer Dawn Yeoman has indicated her intention to not seek re-election and thus stand down from the Committee and as a Charity Trustee at the 2025 AGM.

The remaining elected members of the committee will retire and stand for re-election to their roles at the 2025 AGM. The position of Musical Director is unelected, but Chrissie Mason will stand for re-election as a Charity Trustee. Ann Eastwood has indicated her intention to stand for election to the position of Assistant Treasurer and Charity Trustee.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Financial Report for the year ending December 2024 has been prepared by Treasurer Susan Ansell and Assistant Treasurer Dawn Yeoman.

1. Balance of Accounts on 31st December 2024

	Year End 2024	Year End 2023
Current Account	£2,561.31	£1,455.23
Savings Account	£0.00	£453.54
Deposit Account	£3,005.01	£3,009.61
Petty Cash	£178.46	£168.39
Total	£5,744.78	£5,086.77

The end of year figures for 2023 included £614.69 for the 40th anniversary concert plus money for donations from the Christmas concerts £600 and the Christmas social buffet (£367).

The end of year figures for 2024 include money owed for donation from the Christmas concerts for the Alzheimer's Society. The donation is to be £1,000.

2. Income

	Year end 2024	Year end 2023
40th concert - net gain in 2024	£924.84	£614.69
Bank Interest	£38.34	£12.10
Concerts (net)	£1,733.70	£2,240.60
Donations received	£50.00	£600.00
Easy fundraising	£31.97	£24.59
Isle of Man 2025-balance after deposit paid	£15.00	£0.00
Janet's fundraising (excluding for 40th concert)	£219.88	£0.00
Misc	£35.56	£0.00
Raffle	£427.50	£433.50
Subscriptions	£9,576.80	£7,533.31
Total	£13,053.59	£11,458.79

Please note if comparing the figures above to the pivot table spreadsheet on Box in 2023, that there will be a difference in the figures.

On the pivot table, the concert costs included coach hire, payment by members for the coach, costs for the festivals. It also included some costs associated with the 40th anniversary. They were not net profits from the concerts as the figures are for 2024. The donations and fundraising category in 2023 also included money for 40th concert.

For 2024, we have added some additional categories for clarity and the figures match the pivot table.

The figures have been thoroughly checked by us but have not been prepared or audited by an accountant.

2a Concerts

	Year End 2024	Year End 2023
St John's	£140.00	
Spot On	£226.00	
St Andrews Church	£664.54	
St Nicholas Church	£703.16	
Total	£1,733.70	£2,240.60
40th Concert	£1,539.53	
Overall total	£3,273.23	

The last 3 concerts for 2024 are the net profits from the concerts and include all costs associated with the concerts including banners, printing of leaflets, programmes, tickets, refreshments, Musical Director and accompanist and venue hire. Income is raised from ticket sales and raffles.

3. Expenses

These are the costs associated with running the choir.

In 2023 the costs of the buffets were included in the social category and the coaches were included in the concerts.

We originally joined the National Association of Choirs in 2022 and this membership has continued. In addition to this subscription, in 2024 we have also subscribed to ChoirMate and purchased a Sibelius software licence.

The costs per session for our Musical Director and accompanist have remained as the previous year with no increase. The rent for our rehearsal venue has also remained the same.

	Year End 2024		Year End 2023	
Accompanist	£2,288.00		£2,288.00	
Admin	£276.87		£13.00	
Asset	£91.97		£136.42	
Buffet	£737.50		£0.00	
Coach	£375.00		£0.00	
Donations	£2,200.00		£0.00	
External subscriptions	£476.60		£273.37	
ChoirMate		£176.00		£0.00
Sibelius Software		£147.60		£0.00
NAC		£53.00		£53.00
Website		£100.00		£220.37
Festival	£112.00		£0.00	
Insurance	£206.70		£175.84	
Musical Director	£2,623.44		£2,491.44	

Music	£12.44		£84.37	
Refreshments	£49.87		£75.39	
Rent	£2,250.00		£2,156.26	
Social	£24.06		£110.70	
SumUp Charges	£12.94		£0.00	
Wardrobe	£218.17		£664.00	
Welfare	£465.02		£238.24	
Total	£12,420.58		£8,707.03	

Please note in 2024 the external subscriptions total of £376 includes ChoirMate, Sibelius Software and NAC as shown in the separate column adjacent.

3a. Donations Given

	Year End 2024	Year End 2023
Cleveleys Parish Church	£500.00	
St Nicholas Church	£100.00	
RNLI Pavers	£100.00	
RNLI – 40th concert	£1,500.00	
Total	£2,200.00	£0.00

In 2024, we gave £2,200 in donations to charity. Some of this was money raised in 2023 which was given in January 2024.

In 2024 we donated £100 to the Lytham St Annes RNLI to sponsor an engraved celebration paver for the 200th anniversary of the RNLI. Our paver, engraved with 'The Capricorn Singers Choir', has been laid in the dedicated pathway outside the Lytham St Annes All Weather Lifeboat House as a declaration of our support for the charity.

£1,500 was given to the RNLI from the money raised our 40th anniversary concert. Chrissie's employer very kindly gave an additional £500 which meant the RNLI received £2,000 in total.

In support of the Skipton Music Festival, at a small cost and with the request of an acknowledgement in the festival programme, we purchased a new base for the Ickornshaw trophy which is presented annually to the winners of the Ladies Choir class.

3b. Gift Aid

On 23 May 2024, The Capricorn Singers became registered as a charity and we will be able to claim gift aid for donations received and subscriptions collected from this date where applicable, which will help increase our income for future years.

4. Member Subscriptions

It is proposed that there will be no change to member subscriptions for 2025 and they will remain at £20 per month or £240 per year.

REHEARSALS

During 2024 we had such a variety of rehearsals, possibly more variety than any other year in the history of the choir. In January we welcomed Matthew Thomas for our Lancashire Choir of the Year Prize Singing Workshop from having achieved runner-up position in the 2023 contest. A very interesting evening providing us with lots of tips to use for our performance at the Skipton Music Festival.

In preparation for our 40th Anniversary concert we were delighted to welcome our friends from Thornton Cleveleys Brass Band, Lytham St Annes Shanty Crew, Coasters Choir, Blackpool Male Voice Choir and our recently appointed patron, Jane Wilkinson, to our rehearsals over a number of weeks in May, and again just before the concert in July. These rehearsals were highly enjoyable and a perfect taster of our upcoming celebration.

Prior to the 40th Anniversary rehearsals, in February we welcomed the Lytham St Annes Shanty Crew to work through their self-penned song "Kilgrimol Bells" in preparation for recording the song on their latest CD; which was completed at the following week's rehearsal.

Attendance at rehearsals has again this year been very good, and our achievements demonstrated the positive impact that good attendance at rehearsals can have.

We continue to rehearse at St Andrew's Church in Cleveleys and greatly appreciate the support everyone from the church provides us. Our thank you this year was to offer VIP tickets for our 40th Anniversary concert to Rev Graham, his wife, and the two ladies that help with refreshments at our concerts, Eunice and Ann. We know they all thoroughly enjoyed the celebration and were delighted at being invited as VIPs.

MUSIC

The music repertoire for 2024 was largely dictated by our 40th Anniversary event with few choices adopted from member suggestions. The new inclusions were predominantly those to be sung with our fellow performers, some having been fully or partly arranged by Chrissie and Ian. Although this felt quite limiting to our repertoire, the final result at the 40th Anniversary concert was very worthwhile.

In 2023 rehearsal time for the Christmas repertoire had been limited due to our inclusion in the Lancashire Choir of the Year Final, and our performances felt a little under-rehearsed at times. Therefore, our Christmas 2024 repertoire remained predominantly the same as the previous year with only two new additions giving plenty of rehearsal time in preparation for our Christmas performances.

We were delighted to have many boxes of music donated by Nancy Blackburn of the Whitechapel and Inglewhite Women's Institute, who we met whilst performing at their Christmas meal and meeting at the end of 2023. Nancy had previously run a ladies choir which had disbanded, and was very kind to donate all their music to us. One of the pieces of music which was added to our Christmas repertoire, "A Holly Jolly Christmas" was from this donated music. As a thank you for her generous donation we gave Nancy two free tickets to our 40th Anniversary Concert.

We continue to have very supportive Section Leaders in all three sections of the choir. Thank you to Emily, Dawn and Ann for all the support they give their respective sections. Dawn has now stepped down as the Second Soprano Section Leader and we delighted that Karen has adopted the role and has already proved to be a fantastic leader for her section.

Jan Risely continues in the role of Deputy Musical Director focusing on improving the overall diction and pronunciation. Her fun and entertaining warm-ups continue to improve the diction of the choir and contribute to the numerous successes we again experienced this year. Thank you, Jan.

We are all unanimous in thinking that our accompanist Ian Whalley is the very best choral accompanist on the Fylde Coast and beyond. His skill and musicianship always provide the perfect support for the choir to produce a quality of sound that continues to get better and better. Thank you, Ian, for everything you do for The Capricorn Singers.

PERFORMANCES

The stand-out performance this year was our 40th Anniversary celebration concert. It will be many years before we are able to arrange another such spectacular evening. Everything went perfectly, the Spanish Hall at the Winter Gardens was a stunning venue and it proved to be the very best event we think the choir has ever arranged. It was very special when our founder, Ray Buckley, expressed his delight not only at the end of the event, but also by coming to one of our rehearsals to thank us in person. An event to be remembered for a long time. Thank you to all the working group: Dawn, Debbie, Jane, Janet and Joyce.

This choir has many beautiful voices and we are privileged that so many members are willing to perform a solo either in their own right or as part of the choir repertoire. If you have performed a solo or even a duet this year, thank you. Your solos and duets are an important contribution to the choir's beautiful sound and harmonies.

We again won our class at Skipton Music Festival and also gave a fantastic performance gaining excellent feedback at the Lytham Festival of Performing Arts, accompanied by David Cookson standing in for Ian. This performance became our entry for the Lancashire Choir of the Year and we were delighted to be successful in being selected as a finalist for the second year running. With such a strong contingent of choirs participating, being awarded third place was a big achievement and one we are all very proud of.

For the first time this year we performed prior to one of the outdoor theatres at Lytham Hall. This was a lovely warm-up for our 40th Anniversary concert a couple of days later and elicited lots of excellent feedback from the many attendees. We hope to perform there again soon.

Our Christmas performances were very much tinged with sadness with the deaths of our Alto Sylvia and Chrissie's father on consecutive days in the week before our first Christmas concert. That concert proved just how much resilience we can all have when we join together in song. Sylvia and David would have been very proud of every member of the choir and our audiences certainly appreciated the performances that we gave during such a difficult time for everyone. Sylvia will be missed by everyone in the choir for her warm heart, hugs and positivity. We are so grateful that she closed our 40th Anniversary Concert with "Thank You For The Music" and for all the many memories we have to treasure.

MEMBERSHIP

The choir began 2024 with 40 members and ended it with 41 members.

We gained four new members, Sue R, Yvonne, Carolyn, and Lynda. Two members left, Sue R and Anthea. Much-loved and long-serving member Sylvia sadly passed away in December.

Enquiries from prospective members are sent through the website and answered by the secretary, inviting enquirers to come along and try out the choir for 4 weeks.

Rehearsal attendance ranged from 62% to 100%.

EVENTS

In 2024 the choir performed at ten events including four concerts, two festivals and one competition. Six invitations to perform were declined. Members attended eleven external social events together. Seven fundraising/promotional events were held over the year.

Date	Performance
9 th March	Skipton Music Festival
8 th June	Lytham Festival of Choirs
12 th June	Summer Concert at St John's Church, Thornton
15 th June	County of Song
12 th July	Prior to the performance of Little Women at Lytham Hall
14 th July	40 th Anniversary of The Capricorn Singers
28 th November	Lancashire Choir of the Year competition
7 th December	Christmas Concert at St Andrew's Church, Cleveleys
12 th December	Christmas Concert at St Nicholas' Church Fleetwood
16 th December	Christmas Carols at Hickory's Smokehouse, Thornton

SECTION LEADER REPORTS

First Sopranos (Emily Dyson)

What a fabulous year for The Capricorn Singers with utterly brilliant anniversary concerts and even more trophies being added to the collection. I'm really proud of us all!

As a section we have enjoyed more sectional rehearsals this year and as always the ladies have worked really hard to learn and perform our music. Thank you.

This year we have welcomed Yvonne - it's lovely to have her join us. Anthea, sadly, left us to concentrate on her family and job. We will miss her big smile, positivity and, of course, lovely voice!

Losing Sylvia this year was an enormous shock for all of us. Her joy, warmth, laughter and welcome will be missed by us all for a very, very long time but the kindness and support that the ladies have shown each other has been fabulous and I am grateful for that and so proud of us all.

Thank you, lovely Sop 1 ladies, for all your hard work, commitment, support and singing!

Second Sopranos (Dawn Yeoman)

2024 was a very memorable year mostly for our fantastic 40th concert! We all worked very hard for this concert - all night long ... to quote Lionel Ritchie in our 80s medley and it was so worth it. We also enjoyed our success at 3rd place for the Lancashire Choir of the Year. I feel that this year has been pivotal in The Capricorn Singers in becoming one of the best choirs in Lancashire and one that we can all be proud to be a member. This is thanks to our amazing MD, Chrissie, who brings out the best in us and everyone's hard work. I am also grateful to Jan our deputy MD for continuing to improve our diction which has been commended many times and also Ian our very talented accompanist. We welcome our newest member Carolyn and look forward to new members joining in 2025.

It was also the year I became a Nana and it is for this reason I have decided to step down as section leader and pass the role to Karen. I thank her for all her help this year holding sectional rehearsals when I was not able to. I feel very privileged to have been section leader of such a lovely group of ladies and have enjoyed the role very much.

Altos (Ann Eastwood)

At the start of the year, I made a concerted effort to make notes on what has happened throughout the year and who to thank. Let's hope I don't miss anything! Firstly, I would like to thank Chrissie for doing such a fantastic job as MD and spending so much time and patience in our sessions to enable The Capricorn singers to be the 3rd best choir in Lancashire, an accolade we are all very proud of. Also, Ian for his perfect piano playing filling the room with beautiful melodies in his accompaniment. Jan (auntie Janice), thank you for the time spent working on our diction, it pays off as noted in our festival feedback. And finally, thanks to the rest of the committee making sure the choir is run smoothly and professionally.

Throughout the year we have taken part in a workshop with Matthew, our prize from coming second in the Lancashire choir of the year final 2023, we have featured on the Shanty Crew album, we won Skipton festival, sang at AKS, performed in Poulton and entertained a number of concerts. The main one being in celebration of the choir's 40 years. It was an amazing day where we got to perform with the Blackpool Male Voice Choir, Coasters Choir, Thornton Cleveleys Brass Band, The Shanty Crew and Jane Wilkinson. A day to remember.

The altos this year spent time rehearsing at sectionals and went out on occasion for social events. Always lovely to spend time with good friends and welcome the new. This year we have said hello to Lynda.

It has been a good year where the camaraderie of the choir has been at the forefront. A wonderful group of ladies who are always there to support each other in times of need. We especially showed what a wonderful group we are when we lost our dear friend Sylvia. An incredibly sad time. She loved being in the choir and was a member for 15 years. We will all miss her friendship, laughter and naughtiness.

The altos and I are honoured to be part of the choir and are looking forward to what 2025 holds.

CHARITY

This year Chrissie has worked very hard to help us gain and establish our status as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). As all members agreed with the plan to become registered as a charity at the EGM on 2nd August 2023, and after several amendments to the application and constitution this was finally submitted. The application was successful and our charity number is 1208375. We are grateful for the help and advice of Clive Marquis-Carr from the Lytham St Annes Shanty Crew whilst drafting our charity constitution. Many thanks to Chrissie for her efforts on our behalf.

PATRON

We have been successful in obtaining the renowned soprano Jane Wilkinson as our Patron in 2024 and look forward to performing with her in the future. Jane sang at our 40th concert and has held vocal workshops with us in the past. We are very pleased to welcome her as our Patron.

STAGE WEAR

The search for stage wear is still ongoing and we hope to have some favourable news soon. It is difficult to get the range of sizes we require in a suitable style for all, however, the Committee are resolved to obtain samples to try soon. We also have a choice of stage wear now with the polo shirts which Chrissie kindly obtained for us for our 40th anniversary. These are useful for a change and for less formal concerts.

COMMUNICATIONS

In 2024 we started the migration away from "Box" as our main music and file sharing application and subscribed to "ChoirMate", an app specifically for choirs. ChoirMate has provided many benefits including practice lists, setlists, group messaging, attendance monitoring at both rehearsals and events, the calendar of rehearsals and events, and polls. The aim is to try and stop using "Box" at some point in 2025.

Our Musical Director, Chrissie, continues to send her weekly email to all members highlighting what will be happening in the coming weeks rehearsal along with any event and general updates.

DATA PROTECTION

Presently the choir is not registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) but does hold personal information about all members. As a community organisation and registered charity, we have a duty to comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Committee is undertaking discussions about the possibility of authoring and adopting a Data Protection policy for the choir and whether we need to become members of the ICO.

SAFEGUARDING

As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) we now have a duty for safeguarding all young people and vulnerable adults who we interact with as The Capricorn Singers.

To fulfil this duty, the committee is drafting a Safeguarding Policy which will be presented to members for approval at an upcoming general meeting; date to be arranged. We are grateful for the assistance of Blackpool Male Voice Choir in permitting us access to their policy to be used as an exemplar.

When the policy is approved by members, we will need to appoint a Safeguarding Officer who will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the Safeguarding policy and to field all safeguarding queries and concerns. If you are interested in this role and/or in helping with the creation of the policy, please discuss it with a member of the committee.