



Chair report

ADMS goes from strength to strength

As I look back on my third (and final) year as Chair, it seems to me that ADMS has had another very successful year – the 79th since it was founded in 1946. Our membership remains high, with 80 singers subscribing in the choir and 41 players in the orchestra, surely demonstrating that ADMS is providing a member experience that is enjoyable and fulfilling. Our concerts continue to be well patronised with audience numbers up 10% on the season, indicating that we have the choice of repertoire about right and (to judge from the warmth of their reception) provide enjoyment for our audiences. The programme committee has concluded that there is a strong link between audience numbers and familiarity of repertoire, and this has helped us plan future seasons – see separate AGM report with concert list.

<i>Year</i>	<i>November</i>	<i>Dec Xmas</i>	<i>March (orchestra)</i>	<i>March (choir)</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>Annual total</i>	<i>Friends</i>
24/25	151	172	104	62	167	656	(11)
23/24	111	151	117	98	121	598	(14)
22/23	147	**	129	115	139	530	(15)
21/22	99	**	114	140 *	47	400	(17)
18/19	130	**	120	90	100	440	(19)
17/18	129	**	113	60	110	412	(22)

* St Matthew Passion, included Wantage Choral Society

** not counted and not recorded as no tickets were previously sold

Members and venues

High membership numbers are the nirvana that all musical societies aim for, from the point of view of subscription income and facilitating ticket sales. However, while new members are always welcome, our size continues to cause challenges in fitting both choir and orchestra into any Abingdon concert venue, while preserving lines of sight to the conductor, enabling both choir and orchestra to hear and balance each other, and providing a good experience for members and audiences. While separate choir and orchestral concerts continue at St Helens Church as it is by far the least expensive venue to hire, after a trial run last year, the committee decided to try out Amey Theatre in Abingdon School on 14 June. The venue offers a number of benefits, but when reviewing venues a couple of weeks later, the committee was concerned about the ability to comfortably fit singers and players into the space. We particularly thought it unfair on singers to limit numbers of a growing choir to the 59 seats. Concerns were also expressed by a member of the orchestra with mobility issues that she felt overcrowded and at risk – so please do be considerate of giving space to those who need it when moving around venues, and please don't walk through the orchestra unless unavoidable.

Our past season produced some wonderful performances by choir and orchestra, separately and together. With our new style of afternoon family-friendly Christmas concert, we had another large audience and raised £741 net for PACT Charity – Parents and Children

Together (compare £386 net the previous year for the Samaritans). Please think of a good charity to support in December 2025.

Conducting arrangements

The society's biggest challenge at the beginning of the season, and the task which the committee and its conducting sub-group spent most time on, was to evolve conducting arrangements to fit in with Alex stopping conducting Thursday rehearsals. My research (through Making Music) amongst other joint societies clarified that there were two models in use – one where all conductors are equal, and another where a choral conductor supports the musical director – the latter being the usual approach in professional groups. We wanted the best of both worlds, and in particular to retain Alex while taking the opportunity to appoint a specialist choral conductor to take the choir forward on Thursdays and conduct at least the March choral concert. You will all remember the process of auditions early in 2025 where choir members ultimately made the decision on which conductor to appoint. We thus appointed Rob mid-way through rehearsals for the March concert – not an easy challenge for him, but one he rose to with great enthusiasm. Everyone I've spoken to in the choir feels that Rob has made a brilliant start, and there are already signs that choir membership is rising with Rob's popularity.

ADMS's Constitution has not previously needed to mention any conductor other than the Musical Director, so some changes are needed to rectify that. These small wording changes form another AGM paper, and members present at the AGM on 11 September will be invited to ratify them.

Financial position

Tim's brilliant financial reports indicate a break-even in ADMS's finances for the past season. Though some concerts sustained large losses, this was sometimes due to the number of soloists. Any concert account deficit is effectively supported by surpluses in the general account, and I've always felt that these two accounts together give a reliable indication of the society's health.

As well as a second generous bequest from the estate of late Tony Bradley, who played viola for many years and also served as Vice Chair, we've received a bequest from the family of David Handscomb, who played bassoon. The committee has agreed to use these bequests to organise workshops for both choir and orchestra, to be run by professional musicians – these should be starting in the autumn when a suitable subject piece from our repertoire is available. These would have started this last season but the committee necessarily prioritised putting in place our new conducting arrangements.

Our professional musicians

I believe that one of ADMS's great strengths is to have four professional musicians guiding and steering us, and spurring us on to greater levels of achievement. After David Bannister resigned, Michiyo Machida joined us in September 2024 as Accompanist, and we've already welcomed Rob Legg mid-way through the season. I'm sure all members will join me in extending our thanks to Michiyo and Rob, and of course to our long-serving Musical Director Alex Walker and Leader Kate Bailey, for everything they all do.

Concert programmes 2025/26 and beyond

Programmes for our forthcoming 80th season are already on the website with dates and venues – and included in the AGM pack – I hope all members will find many pieces of interest to rehearse and perform. The website www.adms.org.uk remains the master source of up to date information on concerts, rehearsals and many other aspects of ADMS.

Helping to run ADMS

I'd like to thank all committee members and the fleet of supporting (non-committee) volunteers, without whom the society could not function. Over 30 of you are listed on the "Contact us" page of the website www.adms.org.uk/contact-us/. Thank you for your positive and valued contributions to the running of ADMS.

Committee vacancies

As we look forward to the 2025/26 season, the committee has a number of vacancies.

Chair: I've decided that after three years as chair, I won't be standing again at this AGM. This is because of a desire – after 44 years as a member – to pursue new opportunities alongside my other commitments to running other orchestras. I'll still be playing though, and I've offered the new committee to continue with the tasks I was doing before joining the committee – chairing the repertoire planning group, writing orchestral programme notes, and managing the website.

Vice Chair of the orchestra: Sue Hurst has also decided to step down from her role, but luckily she is willing to continue producing our much-admired posters, and to undertake social media advertising of concerts.

Choir Representative and Choir Membership Secretary: Victoria Adams has resigned from these two roles, though they could be undertaken separately.

I emailed all members about these vacancies in late June, and Pen and I sent reminders in early August, but at the time of writing this, I have not heard of anyone coming forward. If you have time to help, please do consider whether your skills and experience would be helpful to the running of ADMS. My experience has been that the committee is very high-functioning, so you would be joining a smooth-running operation. If you would like more information, or to see a particular role description please let me know at chair@adms.org.uk.

The committee decided last October that in the interests of fairness, AGMs would in future alternate between choir and orchestra evenings, so the next one is on Thursday 11 September 2025 at 19.30 at our usual rehearsal venue: The Manor Preparatory School, Faringdon Road, Abingdon OX13 6LN. I hope as many members as possible will be able to attend, and look forward to seeing you there.

Geoff Bushell
Chair 2022/23 to 2024/25

ADMS Choir 2024/25

Report from the Vice Chair (Choir) Pen Gresford

The 2024-25 season has been as always full of uplifting and wonderful music making – both for the Choir and Choir and Orchestra together. More of that to follow. It has been a great year with some challenges which we've overcome with energy and determination. We all look forward to 25-26 with an exciting and stimulating programme.

However, the key outcome for this season has been the appointment of Dr Robert Legge as our Choral Conductor. A subcommittee was put together consisting of Pen Gresford (chairing the process), Tim Budd, Victoria Adams, Sue Hurst and Geoff Bushell. Through auditions with both Choir and Orchestra and anonymous voting with the opportunity to write free comments the subcommittee were able to come to this happy conclusion. Rob joined us in February 2025.

The process was challenging with a wide range of candidates to consider but Rob was a unanimous choice. We are so very lucky to have him.

Before that we were able to enlist two key 'deps' to take us through the Christmas concert and start to prepare us for March or until a new Choral Conductor was appointed. They were Michael Karcher- Young, who came all the way down from Rugby and was excellent in keeping us focussed and prepared and Malcolm Pearce who is always great to work with. This meant we confidently strode into the Christmas concert and then prepared for the March event.

All this was made easier by the confident and clear accompanying skill which Michiyo Machida brings to each rehearsal – guiding us through the tricky patches and gliding through the easier bits. Thank you, Michiyo.

16th November – joint Choir and Orchestra

Puccini: *Messa di Gloria*, Samuel Coleridge Taylor: *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, Elgar: *Enigma Variations*.

What a Feast! Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, Samuel Coleridge Taylor's *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* and then all fourteen of Elgar's sublime *Enigma Variations*. Puccini was gorgeous with two wonderful soloists in Alex Aldren (tenor) and Efim Zavalny (baritone). *Hiawatha* gave some of us the giggles (definitely not a feast for vegetarians) but we enjoyed them both and tackling the contrast and sang our hearts out as usual. Having soloists of such quality enhances our own performance and we welcome them.

The Orchestra was in great form and it was marvellous to have the full Variations – some of them not so familiar though Nimrod of course was a great hit.

15th December Christmas concert

Orchestral pieces, Rimsky Korsakov *Christmas Eve Suite* and audience and choir carols and Christmas music.

Chorally, this was an interesting selection – but Michael and Malcolm guided us through preparing for Rimsky Korsakov's *Christmas Eve Suite* and we certainly rose to the challenge.

The concert altogether was a joyful, family affair with audience participation at its height particularly during *The Twelve Days of Christmas* and the Orchestra singing as well (were they Lords a Leaping or Geese a laying?). The extended interval was fun – yummy Christmas treats provided by the Orchestra and handed round through the audience and an opportunity for us to raise £741.00 for PACT, a local charity which was a terrific result. As usual the audience and choir carols were interspersed by marvellous orchestral pieces including the dreamy Rose Adagio from Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*.

22 March Spring Concert

Britten: *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Rutter: *Gloria* and Kodaly: *Missa Brevis*

We did fantastically well in this concert considering we'd had different Choral conductors working with us (Michael and Malcolm) and these were not easy or familiar pieces for many. A challenging repertoire indeed. Rob took over in February and immediately sprang into action! We invited James Brown to accompany on the organ which he did with sensitivity and skill and was a huge support. He included some additional organ pieces which broke up the programme and provided even more variety and interest. There were many appreciative comments from the audience.

14th June Summer concert

Verdi: *Requiem*

Alex can have the floor!

'...Congratulations on an absolutely fantastic performance of Verdi's Requiem last night - what an achievement! I am sure you will agree that soloists were tremendous including a particularly dramatic (!) soprano (Jillian Finnamore).

The orchestra were on top form, brilliantly led as ever by Kate. The choir were sounding absolutely tremendous. Rob is clearly doing a magnificent job and the choir is blossoming under his leadership...'

The soloists were indeed a force and carried some drama with them! They also included Jessica Ouston, mezzo, Anthony Flaum, tenor and William Stevens, bass baritone.

We performed this in the Amey Hall – to see how this venue would work for our larger forces. Many people enjoyed this experience, but it is expensive and we are continually working to consider other venues or how we can perform joint concerts successfully in St Helen's Church with a larger Choir.

Keeping the show on the road.

As before, a lot of work takes place behind the scenes to enable our audience to have an enjoyable experience. Lois Smith and Ursula White as usual have been fantastic in charge of the all-important refreshments with a team of willing helpers.

Victoria Adams continued this year in her key Membership role and an enhanced and important role as Choir Rep. However she has decided to stand down to take effect from September 2025 and we will be looking for someone to take this on. Robin Knight has joined as choir rep which is excellent. Steve and Debbie Clarke are now dealing with tickets but thanks to Peter and Jane Smith for all their hard work over the years. Sue Hurst from the Orchestra has created some beautiful posters which truly help to publicise our concerts. Tim Budd continues as our careful and thoughtful treasurer, Cornelius Grotjan our librarian. Tina

Plendereith writes the scholarly and accessible programme notes with help from Geoff Bushell. We're also incredibly grateful to Kevin Mosedale (orchestra, trumpet) and Radley College for their generosity in providing the facility to assemble and print the programmes. Beth Knight – (alto) has joined the committee as Secretary, not a small undertaking and is a great support to all the committee.

Jeanette Thomas has worked tirelessly as our Concert Manager and many thanks to her for her meticulous preparation. Stephen Thomas oversees all preparations at St Helen's with great energy both before and after the concerts.

Thank you everyone.

Going forward – venues and audiences

As mentioned above, we are the ' victims of our success' – a larger Choir! We will continue to explore possibilities for joint concerts as well as successfully singing in St Helen's Church. All suggestions for alternative venues which could hold a larger choir with orchestra are welcome.

We do need to encourage friends and the public to come to our wonderful concerts – part of our success will always be measured by audience size, and it 'feels' so much more invigorating to sing to a good audience.

Membership

The choir continues to go from strength to strength – in no small part due to our appointment of Rob as our Choral Conductor. As always we welcome new singers. We have 81 members currently and some enquiries over the summer.

Vacancies

As this report is being written we have two key vacancies which affect the Choir – Chair of ADMS and Membership secretary. We hope that these will be filled by the close of the AGM on the 11th of September.

Pen Gresford
Vice Chair – Choir
ADMS.

Vice Chair (Orchestra) Report for AGM September 2025

A look back on our Season:

16th November

Puccini – Messa Di Gloria

Coleridge-Taylor – Hiawatha's Wedding Feast

Elgar – Enigma Variations

15th December

Humperdinck – Hansel and Gretel – Overture

Delius – Sleigh Ride

Tchaikovsky – Sleeping Beauty: Rose Adagio

Rimsky-Korsakov – Christmas Eve Suite with choir

A selection of Christmas Carols

8th March

Beethoven – Leonora no 3 Overture

Dvorak – Violin Romance in F minor

Brahms – Symphony 4 in E minor

14th June

Verdi Requiem

This past year has been a real delight for me, with four fantastic concerts involving the orchestra that truly showed the strength and spirit of ADMS. Each performance has been a joy to be part of – not just for the music we've made, but for the way everyone has pulled together with such commitment and camaraderie.

Although I wasn't there for the June concert, testing a new venue is always going to be a challenge but from the feedback I have heard, the orchestra and choir adapted to a new challenge very well and pulled off what I've heard to have been a fabulous concert. Whether Amey Hall is a venue we will use again remains to be seen but you all adapted to a different space very well and just got on with it.

I'm so proud of what we've achieved as a team, both musically and in the way we support each other. The orchestra feels stronger than ever, and it's been a privilege to serve as Vice Chair alongside such talented and dedicated people.

I would like to pay special thanks to Jeanette Thomas for her superb organisational skills and attention to detail which we are all so lucky to have and also to Rosie Bruce for making librarianship look easy and for taking on other roles such as percussion and harp fixing and anything else asked of her, always with a smile. And to Geoff of course, who has been a fantastic Chair of ADMS and a real inspiration during his time on the committee, having navigated us safely through some testing times over the last few years. I have so much enjoyed working with you all. And to other unsung heroes such as Keven Mosedale who prints all our

programmes free of charge and to Kate Geary and John Bleach who supplies us with refreshments every Monday evening. You all make part of a great team.

I have decided to step down from the Vice Chair role and committee at the end of this season, and therefore we need a new Vice Chair of the Orchestra. I will continue to support the orchestra in every way I can – and I'm looking forward to enjoying many more wonderful performances in the years ahead. Looking forward to the November concert and Rachmaninov Symphony 1.

Huge thanks to Kate and to Alex for the work they do in helping us to perform quality concerts and in making ADMS the success it is. I will leave it to Pen in the choir side to talk about Choir achievements and the new Choral Conductor. From the Orchestra side, keep doing what you do best – coming together every Monday evening to create the wonderful orchestral experience we're all so lucky to share.

Sue Hurst

ADMS Annual Financial Report 2024-2025

Year End Financial Report

The finances of the society remain healthy. The attached Statement of Financial Affairs and Balance Sheet show a loss of £497.76 on our standard funds. Looking in more detail, our general fund, which covers the rehearsal costs and other regular outgoings, showed a gain on the year of £2428 and our concert fund showed a loss of £2,926. A £500 bequest brought the total for the year into balance (actually a profit of £2.24).

Our November concert made a small loss while both the Christmas concert and the March orchestra concert ran at a profit. However, the March choir concert and the June concert sustained large losses of £1,763 and £1,393 respectively. For the March choir concert this was the result of fees for 3 choral soloists, an organist, and a disappointingly small audience. The June concert had to cover the costs of 4 soloists plus the hire of the Amey Hall at over £1,000. We continue to rely on subscriptions to subsidise our concert programme. We would benefit from larger audiences and I encourage members to sell as many tickets as possible.

During the year we were very pleased to accept a bequest of £500 from the estate of David Handscombe.

The society reserves remain very healthy at over £21,000. The society has a reserves policy of maintaining a balance equivalent to 6 months turnover, which equates to £15,650.

Keeping the finances of the society in order is very much a team effort. I would like to thank Victoria Adams and Peter Smith in the choir and Alison Forrow and Nicola Gladwell in the orchestra who between them chase members for subscriptions and sort out advanced ticket sales for concerts. I would also like to thank everyone who has helped with tickets, programmes and drinks on concert days, and especially Jeanette Thomas for her help as concert manager. Finally, I must record my thank to Geoff Bussell for his help and advice during his three years as chair of the society.



Tim Budd

ADMS Treasurer

ADMS SOFA and Balance Sheet 2024-2025

PROVISIONAL FIGURES		2024-2025	year up to	30-Jun-25		2023-2024 for comparison		
		£	£	£		£	£	£
Income								
General	Subs, Choir	11,290.00				9,949.00		
	Subs, Orchestra	6,405.00				6,075.00		
	Subs, Friends/Patrons	275.00				375.00		
	Donations	230.00				220.00		
	Grants	0.00				0.00		
	HMRC refund	2,927.02				2,608.56		
			21,127.02				19,227.56	
	Bank Interest		456.08				442.07	
	Money from sale of stock	6.00				18.00		
	Stock in	0.00				0.00		
	Workshop	0.00				0.00		
	Miscellaneous	0.00				0.00		
			6.00				18.00	
				21,589.10				19,616.87
Concerts	Ticket sales		8,272.93			7,241.06		
	Friends/Patrons Tickets		625.00			890.00		
	Refreshments		643.81			655.50		
	Programme Advertising		0.00			0.00		
	Programme Sales		168.67			342.00		
	Joint concert external income		0.00			0.00		
				9,710.41				9,128.56
Social	Social event income		0.00			0.00		
	Charity Donations		0.00			0.00		
				0.00				0.00
TOTAL				31,299.51		TOTAL		28,745.43
Expenditure								
General	Rehearsal Hall		4,738.00			4,121.00		
	Conductors' rehearsal fees		7,795.20			6,966.00		
	Accompanist's rehearsal fees		2,975.00			2,717.00		
	Leader's rehearsal fees		2,465.00			2,400.00		
	Coaching fees		0.00			0.00		
	Making Music Subscription		468.00			449.00		
	Purchase of stock		0.00			0.00		
	Stock out/depreciation		58.76			70.76		
	Workshop Cost		0.00			0.00		
	Bank Charges and Miscellaneous		661.19			898.75		
				19,161.15				17,551.75
Concerts	Concert hall hire		2,268.00			2,460.00		
	Concert fees - conductors		2,575.00			2,500.00		
	Concert fees - pianist/organist		625.00			450.00		
	Concert fees - leader		700.00			680.00		
	Soloist fees and expenses		2,500.00			1,950.00		
	Stiffening		1,155.05			720.00		
	Tickets/posters/programmes		211.74			151.71		
	Music hire		1,699.51			2,087.68		
	PRS fees		192.45			83.97		
	Instrument hire		0.00			0.00		
	Refreshment costs		487.52			506.09		
	Gifts		221.85			193.81		
				12,636.12				11,783.26
Social	Social event costs		0.00			0.00		
	Other		0.00			0.00		
	Donations to Charity		0.00			0.00		
				0.00				0.00
TOTAL				31,797.27		TOTAL		29,335.01
Result for Year				(497.76)				(589.58)

ADMS SOFA and Balance Sheet 2024-2025

	year 24-25 up to	30-Jun-25		Year 23-24 for comparison
	£	£		£ £
Bequest Fund				
Fund at start of year		2000.00		1000.00
Income				
Bequest		500.00		1000.00
Expenditure				
Grants		0.00		
Result for year		500.00		1000.00
Fund at end of year		2500.00		2000.00

Balances	year 24-25 up to	30-Jun-25		Year 23-24 for comparison
	£	£		£ £
Balance on funds at start of year		21,295.53		20,885.11
Result on general fund for year	2,427.95			2,065.12
Result on concert fund for year	(2,925.71)			(2,654.70)
Result on social fund for year	0.00			0.00
Total Result for standard funds		(497.76)		(589.58)
Result on Bequest Fund		500.00		1,000.00
Funds at end of year		21,297.77		21,295.53
Assets and Liabilities:				
Stock (music, folders, wine, podium etc.)		412.07		470.83
Deposit Account		20,139.51		20,183.43
Current Account		546.19		441.27
Unpresented Cheques and Liabilities		0.00		0.00
Float and Petty Cash		200.00		200.00
Total Assets		21,297.77		21,295.53

Notes

- 1) These accounts are presented on a Receipts and Payments Account (RPA) basis.
- 2) Losses are shown in brackets i.e. (2925.71)
- 3) £741.81 was raised for PACT at the Christmas concert. This is not included in the society accounts.

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Abingdon and District Music Society

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Abingdon and District Music Society (ADMS) for the year ended 30 June 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the ADMS 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 ADMS 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

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the ADMS as required by section 130 of the Act;
or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.



Nicholas J Clarke CPFA

1 Lockton Barns Church Lane,
Harwell,
Didcot OX11 0EZ:

Date: August 11th 2025

ADMS Subscriptions 2025-2026

Subscriptions

Last year showed a small loss of £497 on our general and concert funds. In the coming year there will be a number of rises in our outgoings:

- Our hire costs for the hall at the manor school increased by 33% last January. This followed a review of income streams by the school in the light of the imposition of VAT on school fees.
- We have negotiated an increase in fees for our professional musicians based on an inflation figure of 2.8% in February.
- Other costs are likely to rise with inflation.

On the plus side:

- Our reserves are on the high side at £21,297.
- We are currently intending to hold all next year's concerts in St. Helen's church and (if this is ratified by the new committee) our concert costs will be less than last year.
- I am expecting a large legacy from Lesley Lovell's estate shortly. At the time of writing, I do not have the details but these may be available by the AGM.

In view of these factors the committee recommends a modest increase of £5 in the subscriptions for the coming year raising the full subscription to £185 and the discounted subscription rate to £170. This is about 3% which is in line with inflation. Further discounts for new and younger members will continue as now.

The committee recommends that the friends subscription remains at £85. I note that the number of friends has dropped in recent years and I encourage members to recruit new friends of the society. The guaranteed income is a great help to the society.

For members information, the committee has also agreed a £1 increase in concert ticket prices to £14 bought in advance and £16 at the door. and a 50p increase in the cost of a glass of wine to £4.

I invite the meeting to pass a resolution to set the full subscriptions for 2025-2026 at £185 for members with a discounted rate of £170 for payment before the November concert.

External Examiner

Nick Clarke our external examiner has recently indicated that he does not wish to continue in this role. Hence, we are unable to confirm our examiner for next year, as required by the constitution.

I invite members to suggest anyone that we might approach for the job of external examiner. For a society of our size the external examiner does not have to be a qualified accountant, but (to quote from the government web site) *"The examiner will need to demonstrate sufficient financial awareness, numeracy skills and relevant experience to carry out the work and make the judgements required"*. A charity treasurer would be a possibility as would anyone working in finance at an appropriate level.