

Registered Charity Number: 262813



BEDFORDSHIRE ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY

Trustees' Annual Report

For The Financial Year Ending 31st July 2025

Bedfordshire Orchestral Society

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SECTION A: REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

Charity name:	BEDFORDSHIRE ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY (the ``Society``)		
Other names the Society is known by Registered Charity Number	Bedford Symphony Orchestra; Bedford Sinfonia 262813		
Contact address of the Society	Dominic Mills & Co, 11 Grove Place, Bedford, MK40 3JJ		
Email	enquiries@bedfordsymphony.com		
Website	www.bedfordsymphony.com		
Committee members who served during the twelve months ending 31 st July 2025 and who are for legal purposes Trustees	Ann Collins	Committee Member	Appointed 16.10.2025
		Interim Chair	Appointed 04.2025
	Julia Lence	Hon Secretary	Appointed 16.10.2024
	Jo Ploszajski	Hon Treasurer	Appointed 15.05.2025
	Benjamin Phillips	Committee member	
	Dominic Mills	Committee member	
	Vicky Owen	Committee member	Appointed 16.10.2024
	Caroline Waters	Ex-Officio	
	Sheila	Committee	Resigned
	Kasnowska	member	14.07.2025
	Clive Bachmanis	Hon Treasurer	Resigned 15.05.2025
	David Mercer	Chair	Appointed 16.10.2024 Resigned 25.03.2025
	Louise Radok	Chair	Resigned 16.10.2024
	Nicola Phillips	Secretary	Resigned 16.10.2024
	Caroline Cartwright	Committee member	Resigned 16.10.2024
Bankers	CAF Bank Limited, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4TA		

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Solicitors:

Dominic Mills & Co, 11 Grove Place, Bedford, MK40 3JJ

Independent Examiner

John Sheehan, JohnSheehan@tc-group.com

Section B: STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Description of the Society's Trusts

The Trustees of the Society are the three officers and the five elected Ordinary Members of the Committee (each a Trustee and together the 'Trustees'). In accordance with the Constitution, each year the membership of the Society elects the Officers and Ordinary Members of the Committee by a ballot at the Annual General Meeting. The Constitution provides that the Trustees may fill any vacancies arising on the Committee. The Chairperson is eligible to serve in this capacity for a maximum consecutive period of five years after which period he/she may be re-elected as an Ordinary Member. The other Officers and elected Ordinary Members may stand for re-election without restrictions.

On appointment and at any subsequent re-appointment thereafter, every Trustee is required to provide written confirmation to the Society of their consent to act as a Trustee of the Society and to confirm that they are not disqualified by law from acting as Trustee. Each Trustee has been provided with a copy of the following publications issued by the Charity Commission:

The Essential Trustee: What you need to know (CC3- May 2018), Charities and Public Benefit. The Charity Commission's general Guidance on public benefit (PB1 Sep. 2013).

The Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or other benefits.

Management of the Society

The management of the Society and the control of its funds are vested in a committee consisting of:

The three Officers (Chairperson, Hon. Treasurer, Hon Secretary):

The five elected Ordinary Members (two representatives each from the Bedfordshire Symphony Orchestra and the Bedford Sinfonia as well as the Publicity Coordinator.

The Co-opted Members (Webmaster and Outreach Organiser); and the Ex-officio Members appointed by the Officers and elected Ordinary Members who advise the Trustees on the matters under discussion.

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Affiliations of the Society

The Society is a member of Making Music- The National Federation of Music Societies (Registered Charity Number 249219) which represents and supports amateur and semi-professional music groups of all genres throughout the United Kingdom.

Section C: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Aims of the Society:

The Society exists primarily to promote musical education in Bedfordshire. In furtherance of this aim, the Society runs two orchestras, the Bedfordshire Symphony Orchestra and the Bedford Sinfonia.

Principal Activities:

The Society regularly organises and promotes around ten classical music concerts each year in and around Bedford featuring performance by its two orchestras who are often joined by established soloists of international repute as well as younger soloists embarking on their professional careers. Both orchestras regularly support other musical groups in and around Bedfordshire in their training and performances.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these aims:

In accordance with section 2(1)b within section 3(1) of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, the Trustees have had regard to the guidance on public benefit issued by the Charity Commissioners when exercising any powers and duties to which the guidance would be relevant. The Trustees believe that the Society conforms to the public benefit requirements of the Charity Commission. The reasons for this are:

The Society has charitable objectives which demonstrate public benefit in promoting the education, art, practice and public performance of music. All individuals in the local community have the potential to benefit from the activities of the Society. There are no restrictions on the membership of the Society - anyone with an interest in music can become a non - playing member. Playing membership is restricted to those performing in the two orchestras who meet the age and playing standard requirements. The concerts promoted by the Society are open to all members of the public without restriction.

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Short educational talks are often given at concerts. The Society gives assistance to other music groups in Bedfordshire in support of musical education initiatives. From the 25-26 season, children are offered free tickets to all concerts and full-time students pay half-price.

Section D: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCES

The 2024-2025 season has been one of artistic growth, community revitalisation, and renewed optimism. Musically, BOS delivered a full and ambitious programme. Across both our orchestras, Sinfonia and BSO, we presented a series of high-quality concerts that were warmly received by audiences.

The programme included the following: Tchaikovsky Symphony 5, Panufnik's Double Percussion Concerto and Britten's Violin Concerto, among others over 9 concerts during the season.

An important aim this year was to provide extended rehearsal experience for the 2-year conductor selection process. This was a major influence on the work in 24-25 and the subsequent costs of putting on such concerts that required specific scores and instrumentation.

The season included performances with Bedford Choral Society and small-scale community-focused "Out and About" baroque music concerts in two villages north of Bedford. These concerts were very special as they were played in memory of Richard Tyler and Frank Stevens, two members of the charity, sorely missed.

Bedford Sinfonia gave their time and skills once again to the Rotary Club Concerto Masterclass, where they accompanied the three young winners in an informal workshop. Testimonials from attendees consistently praised the musical standard and professionalism on display.

In terms of public engagement, we achieved a major milestone by more than doubling our ticket sales this season from the previous season. Over 2,100 tickets were sold this season a testament to the growing appetite for orchestral music in our region and to the efforts of members and volunteers in spreading the word. An increased focus on gaining visibility and asking orchestra members to promote concerts has been extremely successful.

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Our programming has become increasingly bold and dynamic, and we are particularly excited about the new repertoire lined up for the next two seasons. We've already added in "meet and greet" opportunities for our younger audience members, the opportunities to offer pre-concert talks and Open Rehearsals to both recruit and open

up the rehearsal process to our audience.

A special artistic collaboration with two classes of Year 6 children at Bedford Greenacre Independent School is another example of our commitment to not only improving the experience of our concerts, but also opening up to new members of the community and engaging with other organisations and improving our visibility.

This was also a year of expansion and deepening engagement within our membership. Particularly notable was the increase in younger players joining BSO, with the number of under-18s quadrupling. The recruitment of new brass, string, and percussion players for the upcoming season 2025-6 has helped to stabilise and strengthen our orchestras, while a series of informal events, from rehearsal breaks to social gatherings, has fostered a greater sense of connection between members. That shared spirit of ownership and camaraderie is one of our most valuable assets.

Behind the scenes, after a lot of research, we also successfully secured a new rehearsal venue for BSO at the Bedford Greenacre Independent School, which offers extended time and a more supportive rehearsal environment. Having a longer rehearsal, a short breaktime with refreshments, easy parking, a great acoustic, where we sound fabulous, has transformed the rehearsal experience to make it more sociable, easier to access and more productive!

A key leadership transition occurred with the appointment of a new Conductor and Music Director for BSO, Bjorn Bantock. Recruiting a new conductor over a two year period has also been a source of real learning for the Society. We'd like to thank the conductors who worked extensively with us over that period and in this last season also did two concerts with us: Cathal Garvey and John Beswick. We welcome Bjorn to the team and look forward to working with him.

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We were also delighted to appoint Ian Smith as the Bedford Sinfonia Conductor and Music Director. Ian has been our Guest Conductor for a number of years and we're so pleased that he is joining us as our Music Director and Conductor. Together with Ben Phillips on the Committee, Ian and Bjorn have already prepared a fabulous programme for us for next season and beyond.

In accordance with good organisational practice, we are also working on making our governance more explicit by developing relevant policies for Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Diversity and Inclusion. This is a work in progress with our Safeguarding Policy being prioritised and completed earlier in the season.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Yet, alongside these achievements, the year has not been without its difficulties. The Society continues to face significant financial pressures. Income from ticket sales, though improved, remains unpredictable due to last-minute purchasing behaviours among audiences. This makes cash flow difficult to manage and undermines our ability to plan effectively. With additional members coming in and more members paying subscriptions, this aspect will greatly help our ability to plan ahead. Funding and sponsorship is now at the forefront of our minds to help support the charity.

Furthermore, our current organisational structure is showing signs of strain. The demands of running two orchestras, managing public engagement, and delivering high-quality events place a considerable burden on a small number of committee members and volunteers. Recognising this, we have begun restructuring the committee to include new roles, such as having designated managers for each orchestra to better distribute responsibilities.

Perhaps the most important lesson of the past year is that sustainability, both financial and human, must be built into our long-term planning. This includes adopting a more strategic approach to funding over a five-year cycle, and implementing a marketing strategy that relies not only on digital or print outreach but also on the enthusiasm and advocacy of our own members and collaboration with other local organisations.

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For many years it has been custom and practice that many players in Bedford Sinfonia have not been asked to make a contribution to the running of the orchestra. The committee took the view that this was no longer viable, particularly as our constitution explicitly says that all playing members will pay a subscription. The committee therefore took the decision to ask all playing members of Sinfonia to make a voluntary donation towards the running costs of the Orchestral Society in the 2025-26 season.

From the 26-27 season, it will be expected that all playing members will pay a subscription towards the Society's running costs.

Looking Forward: Strategic Priorities

Our financial model is still heavily dependent on the consistent sale of tickets and the

collection of membership fees. While we are grateful for grants such as the £2,500 received from the Gale Family Trust and support from local organisations including the Bedford Castle Rotary and Bedford Greenacre Independent School, these are not guaranteed sources. The upcoming renovation of the Corn Exchange poses an additional challenge. Obviously, using smaller venues severely reduces our potential ticket sales. Our priority to sell out in each concert remains at the top of our strategic list of priorities.

In parallel, we are beginning a concerted effort to expand our funding base. This includes identifying and applying for grants, cultivating relationships with local sponsors, and building a more consistent patronage model. Growth in audience numbers remains critical to this strategy, and we are relying on and expecting every member to be an advocate by sharing upcoming events, inviting friends and family, and helping us reach new demographics.

We are increasing our focus on governance and volunteer capacity. We need more people actively involved in the running of the Society, whether on the committee, at rehearsals, or in concert operations or in publicity. Without this additional support, it will be difficult to maintain the level of quality and frequency of concerts our members and audiences have come to expect.

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Next season (2025-6) and the 60th Anniversary Season (2026-2027)

As we look toward to this coming season, 2025-6 and to the next, the Society's 60th anniversary and beyond, we have an exciting opportunity to grow. The 60th birthday milestone offers us a unique opportunity to celebrate our past while laying the groundwork for a bold future.

Plans are already in motion for a season-long Beethoven celebration where we will be playing all of his nine symphonies, which will unite both of our orchestras in shared programming. We're delighted that Bedford Choral Society have agreed to join us for Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 "The Choral Symphony", in what will be the gala concert of the season in the Corn Exchange in May 2027.

We also aim to deepen our community outreach, particularly through projects such as the Young Composers' Initiative for May 2026 and collaborations with schools and other

organisations like U3A and the Rothsay Education Centre. These initiatives not only align with our educational mission but also allow us to build lasting relationships with new and returning audiences.

To support this ambitious programme, we will be approaching potential sponsors and funders. We also intend to document our 60-year history, capturing the voices and experiences of past members and celebrating the legacy that continues to inspire us today.

Thank You: Our Volunteers

None of this work is possible without our members, our volunteers, and our supporters. The strength of the Bedfordshire Orchestral Society lies in its people. Whether setting out chairs, baking cakes, selling tickets, distributing flyers, or leading rehearsals, every contribution matters and every contribution is valued.

As we prepare for the year ahead, we urge all members to consider how they might offer their time or skills. Even a small commitment like helping with refreshments, or helping us to take our flyers further afield, or simply sending out an email about a concert, can have a meaningful impact.

If you are connected to music teachers or young musicians, please help us spread the word about our free children's tickets for concerts and opportunities for older children at an advanced level to play with us.

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To you, our Members: thank you for everything you do to support the Society in so many ways, not only financial but with your ideas, your collaboration, your generosity to help to bring music education, in its fullest sense, to as many people as possible both in and outside of the Society.

Together, let's continue to grow, perform, and inspire.

Ann Collins,

Interim Chair

Bedfordshire Orchestral Society, Sept 2025

Section E: FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial Activities and Results

Summary

The 2024-25 season saw a welcome increase in receipts of £8947 from £25,712 in 2023-4 to £34,659 in 24-25. This was due to an increase in ticket sales of £6414, and increased grants

and donations of approximately £1000 and an increase in member subscriptions of £1750 over the previous season.

However, the cost of the Society's activities in 2024-25 was £42,603 and therefore the Society made a loss of £7,944 over the 24-25 season.

The Society was very grateful to the Gale Family Charitable Trust for a grant of £2500 towards the Society's activities and £750 was raised through other fundraising.

The Committee continued to experience changes in personnel during the 24-25 season, but it remained focused on putting on concerts alongside tighter financial control and a strong focus on developing social media and understanding effective ticket sale strategies. This meant that finances were stabilised by the end of the season, although making a loss over the year.

The above measures have been continued into 25-26 and the Society is now predicting a surplus for the current season.

Investment Policy

The Trustees have a policy for investments that states the Society may only invest in collective investment schemes promoted and marketed by the Charities Aid Foundation. The policy allows for up to 80% of the Society's investments to be held in income funds.

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The policy is stated to be reviewed by the Trustees at least every five years. The policy is now overdue for a review.

The Society has not held investments as of 31st July 2024.

Reserves Policy

The Reserves Policy remains unchanged and is as follows:

Requirements for reserves: The Society commits to incur expenditure in the furtherance of its charitable objectives often significantly in advance of securing revenues/donations. The Trustees consider it prudent to hold reserves from which to meet shortfalls of receipts over payments should they occur.

Level of reserves: The Trustees consider it prudent to hold reserves that represent at least 75% of the expenditure of the previous year. Reserves more than 300% of the expenditure of the previous year could be considered excessive and therefore earmarked for expending on exceptional items in accordance with the charitable objectives.

Steps to be taken to maintain reserves within the agreed range: Year on Year the Trustees will endeavour to manage the affairs of the Society such that expenditure is at least matched

by receipts. In any financial year where payments exceed receipts by an amount more than 20% of the aggregate amount of receipts for the year the Trustees will seek to reduce expenditure in future years to alleviate the deficit.

Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the reserves policy: The Hon. Treasurer will report at the AGM compliance (or otherwise), with the Society's reserve policy. The policy will be reviewed every five years and is due for review.

Investment Policy: It is the policy of the Trustees to only invest in collective investment schemes promoted and marketed by the Charities Aid Foundation. Any investment decisions are to be taken by at least two of the Trustees acting jointly. It is the policy of the Trustees to diversify investments equally amongst growth and income funds. The policy will be reviewed at least every five years and is due for review.

Reserves

The Society's bank reserves were £24,330 at the start of 24-25 season and were £16,385.61 at the end of 24-25.

The Society does not hold any investments.

Therefore, total reserves were £16,385.61 on 31st July 2025.

Expenditure for the 24-25 season was £42,066.92

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The Society was therefore in breach of its Reserves Policy as it ended the financial year with less than 75% of the previous year's expenditure in reserves. Measures to increase income from grants and ticket sales were begun in the 24-25 season and will be continued in the 25-26 season along with measures to reduce costs. The Society will thus address the shortfall of £15,000 and aim to rebuild reserves to the required minimum of £30,000.

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Trustees' Report for the year ended 31st July 2025**SECTION F: SUMMARY STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED 31 JULY 2024**

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2025 £	2024 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Charitable Activities	1	24,402.98	0	24,402.98	17,989.43
Donations and Gifts	2	3,250.69	536.01	3,786.70	2,935.57
Member subscriptions	3	6,431.86	0	6,431.86	4,675.00
Other – bank interest		37.00	0	37.00	112.00
Total Income and Endowments		04,122.53	536.01	04,658.54	25,712.00
Charitable Activities	4	42,066.92	536.01	42,602.93	36,141.00
Total Expenditure		42,066.92	536.01	42,602.93	36,141.00
Net Income/ (Expenditure)		(7,944.39)	0	(7,944.39)	(10,665.39)
Transfer between funds				0	0
Net movement in funds		(7,944.39)	0	(7,944.39)	(10,665.39)
Total funds brought forward		24,330.00	0	24,330.00	34,759.00
Total funds carried forward		16,385.61	0	16,385.61	24,330.00

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 JULY 2025

		Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2025 £	2024 £
Assets:					
Cash at Bank and in Hand	5	16,385.61	0	16,385.61	24,330.00
		£0385.61	0	£0	£24,330.00
Reserves					
	6	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 31/07/2025 £	Total 31/07/2024 £
		16,385.61	0	16,385.61	24,330.00

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The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 29/04/2026 and signed on their behalf.

Mrs K Mason Chair/Trustee

Notes on pages 15 to 17 form part of the financial statements.

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Notes to the Accounts:

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" and SORP (FRS102) issued on 1st October 2019 and applicable UK Accounting Standard and the Charities Act 2011.

Fixed Assets

There are no fixed assets.

Income

Income is brought into account on a received basis.

Intangible Income

Intangible income in the form of donated facilities and voluntary help etc is not included in the financial statements since it is not considered practicable to quantify such income.

Expenditure

Expenditure is stated inclusive of value added tax and is brought into account in the year in which it is paid. Resources are allocated to the particular activity where the costs relate directly to the activity.

Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds are donations and other income and resources received or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purposes and are treated as general funds. Designated funds are unrestricted funds and are designated by the committee for particular purposes.

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are to be used for the specific purposes laid down by the donor/funder.

Note

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
1 Charitable Activities Income				
Hire of orchestra	5,169.00	0	5,169.00	8,634.00
Ticket sales	19,233.98	0	19,233.98	9,115.04
Misc	0	0	0	240.39
Total	24,402.98	0	24,402.98	17,989.43

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2 Donations and gifts

Fundraising	33.79	0	33.79	0
Friends of BOS	0	0	0	0
Gift Aid	0	0	0	0
Donations	716.90	536.01	1,252.91	0
Grants from Charitable Trusts	2,500.00	0	2,500.00	2,935.57
Total	3,250.69	536.01	3786.70	2,935.57

3 Members subscriptions

6,431.86	0	6,431.86	4,675.00
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Total receipts

34,122.53	536.01	34,658.54	25,712.00
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4 Charitable Activities Expenses

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2025 £	2024 £
Rehearsal venue hire	3,591.46	0	3,591.46	} 9048.46
Concert venue hire	6,857.92	0	6,857.92	}
Conductors' fees and Leaders' fees	11,697.80	0	11,697.80	}
Extra musicians	5,179.00	0	5,179.00	} 21714.35
Soloists	4,050.00	0	4,050.00	}
Music hire	3,416.99	0	3,416.99	2256.29
Performing Rights payments	84.90	0	84.90	0
Printing	4,319.00	0	4,319.00	2273.50
Sundry concert expenses	730.64	0	730.64	0
Website	1385.56	0	1385.56	0
Bank charges	85.50	0	85.50	180.25
Subsidy for U19 membership subscriptions and U19 free concert tickets	0	536.01	536.01	0
Insurance etc	668.15	0	668.15	668.15
	42,066.92	536.01	42,602.93	36,141.00

5 Cash at bank and in hand

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2025 £	2024 £
Current account	16,246.91	0	16,246.91	24,181.32
Deposit Account	0	0	0	0
Cash in hand (float)	138.70	0	138.70	148.68
	16,385.61	0	16,385.61	24,330.00

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6 Reserves

	Opening Balance 01.08.24	Movement In	Movement Out	Transfers	Closing Balance 31.07.25
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds	24,330.00	34,122.53	42,066.92	0	16,385.61
Restricted funds	0	536.01	536.01	0	0
	24,330.00	34,658.54	42,214.54	0	16,385.61

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SECTION G: INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Independent Examiner's Report to the Bedfordshire Orchestral Society

For the Year ended 31 July 2025

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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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:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities 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.

JP Sheehan FCA

42 Mallard Hill
Bedford
Beds
MK41 7QR

16 April 2026.

SECTION H: TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES AND DECLARATION

Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the transactions of the Society for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare financial statement on a going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Society will continue to operate
- Follow applicable accounting standards, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements

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The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounts and records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the Society, and enable them to

ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011 (the ``2011 Act``). They are also responsible for the safeguarding of the Society and take reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and any irregularities.

The Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the 2011 Act and that an independent examination is required as carried out by John Sheehan Section G.

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

Date: 29/04/2026

Karen Mason

Karen Mason

Chair Bedfordshire Orchestral Society 2025-26