

LFC Chair's Report September 2024 – November 2025

Mozart Mass in C minor – Carolling - Night of Wonder and Christmas – The Art of Song – Dvorak Stabat Mater – Chingford Festival -A Day at the Fair

This has been an enjoyable and successful year for the choir. We have tackled a range of music from Mozart to Rathbone and Elton John (I perhaps should not link those two in the same sentence). Membership has remained strong and we continue to entice new recruits. We have also, sadly, lost some members and one or two have sought other choirs and, on occasion, I am delighted they have returned to us. We continue to contribute to the community by carol singing, participating in the Chingford festival and Tom Randle's *Messiah* as well as raising funds for the Forest Churches Emergency Night Shelter.

The choir is now in a sound financial position and the subscriptions did not have to be increased this year. We economised by not using an orchestra for the Mozart concert. Members should be aware that we usually make a loss on each concert and that subscriptions are needed to cover the fees for our MD and accompanist as well as venue hire.

Therefore, fundraising makes an important contribution: the ever-successful Quiz Night, Bonus Ball, book and plant sales all boost our funds. Many thanks to everyone who helps to organise or donates.

The choir has been extremely fortunate to receive a bequest from Stanley Bird, former member and Chair, who did a great deal for the choir. This will fund the orchestra for the *St Matthew Passion* in May 2026.

The choir continues to try out new formats for concerts and the shorter concerts starting early and with no interval seem to be enjoyed by our audience.

In the summer we had a very jolly social evening at The Rose and Crown to finish the year.

As ever it is crucial that every member of the choir does all they can to publicise our concerts. We work hard at the music and want it to reach as many people as possible. This includes encouraging new audiences. Nick has been doing exciting publicity on social media and Emily produces wonderful flyers. Please distribute and display them everywhere you can. Marian does a great job putting our concerts on Ticketsource which makes our tickets easily available in advance.

The committee continues valiantly to steer the course of the choir and undertake the many practical tasks which are necessary to all we do. I am very glad to have Kairen Zonena back, in good health, as Vice-chair, and to have lured Pip Kings back taking responsibility for Associate Members and Forest Diamonds. Sally Robinson has decided to step back from the committee although she retains her important role as Part Representative for the tenors. Michelle Matthews has stepped down from the committee and from her role as secretary. Many thanks to them for all they have contributed. Paul Gillett and Lorraine Dawes have done a lot of patient work to transfer us to the Making Music platform which is proving a useful resource. Clare Myers has dedicated a huge amount of time throughout the year and recently to get the accounts in order. David Pomfret has helped. I am very grateful to them both for their careful and time-consuming work. It is also great not to have to worry about Concert Management as Janet is so efficient and forward thinking. Thanks to her and to every member of the committee for all they do.

Thanks to Lillian Munn and those who help sustain us with refreshments which also raises money for the choir Thanks too to Steve Lowe for lighting us and recording us.

A crucial issue for the future of the choir is filling key roles on the committee. Some tasks do not need committee membership (Lorraine for example does a very effective job looking after the website – thanks to her). If I remain Chair would you consider being co-chair, ready to step up next year? Could you further ramp up the publicity for concerts? Could you take responsibility for the Verdi *Requiem* planned for 2027? Could you take over the mulled wine next Christmas? And we desperately need a secretary. Please step up if you can.

My ambitions for the choir are: that attendance should be more consistent so we can work on our overall sound; to select a range of music and produce an exciting variety of concerts; to develop a season's repertoire to broaden our singing experience and to have music ready at short notice and to maintain the community spirit of LFC.

Huge thanks to everyone who helps in all kinds of ways. A massive thanks to Leo our incomparable accompanist. And, of course to Jonathan. It shows how much he is central to the choir when he goes to Australia for three weeks and he is sorely missed! His good humour, musicality and relentless hard work are key to the performance and sociability of LFC.

Looking forward now to an exciting year ahead in 2025 – 6

Alison

Chair

October 2025

AGM – November 2025 – Music Director's Report

We didn't have our "Friends of London Forest Choir" concert this year. But we were busy rehearsing for the concert in early November – Mozart's *Mass in C*, which we performed in Chingford Parish Church. As always the soloists were excellent. Juliet Fraser, Nina Bennett, James Micklethwaite and Omar Ebrahim, with Michael Emerson at the organ in his own church. The choir did a magnificent job, performing excellently. There was a little wobble where we came adrift from the organ, but the choir always seem to stay steady and correct with no problem. There was a lot more to learn this time, because we had not seen this version before. It contained a lot of the missing movements inserted from various bits of other Mozart. A splendid idea, but it is easy to tell when Mozart wrote a line for singers and when we are singing an instrumental line. It actually made the piece a little too long for our predicted 1:15 hour concert. It eventually ran for 1:30. Our plan was to perform early in the evening (6pm-7pm slot) so we over-ran that idea a little. It was a very interesting edition and I'm glad we investigated it thoroughly, but I don't think we'll perform that version again!

Our Christmas concert was, as usual, a popular event. We had the Sylvan Ensemble to play for us which always gives the concert a big lift. But the choir were on top form – as they always are for this concert. It is always such a happy atmosphere and that is almost as important as the musical performance. We asked Tetiana Makovei (Ukrainian soprano) who had delighted us and the audience in the summer, to return to sing with us. She sang the wonderful Ukrainian folk song she performed before. She also sang some Ukrainian carols, including "Schedryk", which we know as "the Carol of the Bells". We also performed "Night of Wonder" and I'm very grateful Helen Rathbone for coming to sing the solo in that piece (a solo originally written for her).

We had been asked to perform on 10th January at the Ukrainian Church, but they cancelled it.

On March 1st we performed "The Art of Song", a concert we first performed just after lock-down. In fact, we had learnt some of the music in lock-down. But on that occasion, we were still having to socially distance and our numbers were well down. However, this time we back to full strength and we performed well. Leo, as always, was excellent – both with supportive and beautiful playing. I feel this is a programme we could perform in many places. It has the advantage of being "familiar music" (like a *Messiah* or a Fauré *Requiem*) but being a new version of everything, and unperformed by any other choir!

In May we performed Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* – a repeat of the very first concert the choir and I performed together! Our soloists were Cheryl Enever, Freya Jacklin, Emyr Lloyd Jones and Stephen Gadd with Greg Drott on organ. The choir sang brilliantly – I was very proud. I know the tenors had a tricky start because they had the sun in their eyes and couldn't see me, but once the sun had moved a little we were all on great form. The concert I would describe as "thrilling". I left the building on a real high!

The Chingford Festival was rather disappointing this year. It was all but cancelled for bad weather. All outside events and stalls were called off. And although the performances in the church went ahead, the usual crowds were not in attendance. It also brought to a head the fact that we do not currently have a fighting list of what we used to call "Season's Repertoire" – pieces we can just get up and perform. I am determined to get back to grips with this. We used to be able to go and sing at the South Bank for 20 minutes without too much trouble.

The summer concert was also a repeat of a concert that we performed about 7 years ago – *A Day at the Fair*. I was really encouraged this time by the noticeable improvement in quality of

performance since last performance. This may also have been due to the fact that on this occasion, we only performed this one piece. Last time it was only half of the concert. But I believe this is a far better way to perform – less music, but better quality. I believe strongly that this is the way to encourage audiences to our concerts. Make them shorter (no-one ever complains that a concert wasn't long enough; they do however let me know when it went on too long!) and better standard of performance. It's not difficult to see that this is better for our audiences.

On this general note, I would suggest that the way forward is to perform more of these "earlier, shorter and better" concerts. We must realise that we cannot automatically expect an audience. Our friends, family and followers are very loyal, but we must never take their attendance as given.

I am also aware that we have performed repertoire we have done in the past too many times recently.

But I am very pleased with the general quality of performance of the choir. We sound good, and I am pleased that although I am becoming more fussy about many details I may well have let pass before, this does seem to be working and I don't hear any complaints. (Seriously, do let me know if you have any complaints by the way.) It does however mean we don't quite learn as much repertoire as we did, but I think we learn it better. It does however relate back to what I mentioned previously about the "Seasons Repertoire" or rather our lack of it.

So musically, I think the choir is very healthy. I am extremely grateful to Alison Clewlow for her continued support and the fantastic job she does for the choir. I'd also like to thank all those on the committee who do such wonderful work. We really are lucky with the talents people share. Amongst them I'd like to thank Liz Wade and Ruth Kaufman for their smooth running of the library, but I'd particularly like to thank Clare Myers for the huge amount of work she has put in as treasurer. The amount of work she has had to do on the accounts recently deserves a medal, but I'm sure the whole choir will join with me in thanking her wholeheartedly for this work. But there are many other people I am very grateful to. Emily Morrell produces, without fail, an excellent poster and programme for each concert, even when she's incredibly busy with children and work. And of course we are blessed by the firm but kind way that Janet Cassford gets us through each concert! And Paul Cooper gets all the staging sorted while we're not looking! And for all the others who play their part and are truly vital to the choir's well-being.

But as always, I must close by thanking Leo - without whom we would not be able to learn as much music or as well. He really is a boon to the choir.

Jonathan Rathbone

23rd October 2025

LONDON FOREST CHOIR

Trustees' Report: year ending 31 August 2025

Please read in association with General Account Receipts and Payments, Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Summary

As ever, I would like to put on record my thanks to David Pomfret for his support across the year and help in preparation of these year end accounts.

Despite noticeable increases in many of our costs in 2024/5, we had a reasonable year financially. We were most grateful to receive a generous bequest of £5,000 from Stanley Bird and a grant of £1,000 from the Charities Trust, which, along with Gift Aid allowed our balance to remain healthy. Receipts exceeded Payments on the General Account to the extent of £11,141 on a turnover of £50,944.

General Account Receipts

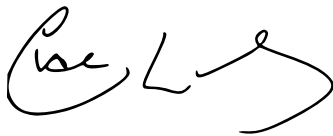
1. Concert Ticket Sales of £11,099 were ostensibly higher than those for 2023/24 (£7,956) although due to current FOH arrangements it is difficult to separate ticket sales from bar and other concert sales.
2. This year we performed just one Orchestral concert (out of 5) as the cost of these puts a large burden on our finances (details attached).
3. Membership Subscriptions increased to £19,893.00 from £18,378 in 2024/25. This was due to small increases in both subscription rates and membership numbers. Associate membership/Forest Diamonds almost doubled from £595 to £1,170 thanks to sterling work by Pip.
4. Income Tax recovery under Gift Aid was £5,190

Total Receipts were £50,945 as against £48,443 in 2023/24

Total Payments were £39,804 as against £42,919 in 2023/24

Statement of Assets over Liabilities

Our **total assets at 31 August 2025** were **£48,259.19** as against £37,119 at 1 September 2024 (including a £8,656 contingency held in the Tour Account on behalf of members)



Clare Myers:
Treasurer, London Forest Choir

15 October 2025

THE LONDON FOREST CHOIR

Registered Charity No: 272799

Year ending 31 August 2025

GENERAL ACCOUNT: RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

2024/25

2023/24

RECEIPTS

2023/4 Income: Donations rec'd for charitable causes £2,942.87

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Subscriptions £19,893.00 £18,378.00

Friends, Associates & Forest Diamonds £1,170.00 £595.00

CONCERT INCOME

Concert Ticket Sales £11,099.41 £7,955.95

Bar sales £638.00 £1,096.00

Programme sales £3.00 £129.00

FUNDRAISING

Rehearsal Refreshments £498.00 £649.00

Bonus Ball £689.00 £626.00

Quiz Night £801.00 £737.00

Social Events - £107.00

Fundraising (other) £413.57 £359.00

OTHER INCOME

Bank interest £408.11 -

Grants £1,000.00

Sponsorship - £6,781.00

Donations (also see Deposit account) £5,470.00 £303.00

Gift Aid/Tax Refund £5,190.00 £9,282.00

Easy Fundraising £102.11

Donations received for charitable causes £125.27

Folder Sales/Purchase £300.00 -£57.00

Event Receipts - £1,023.00

Sundry Receipts £201.00 £377.00

TOTAL RECEIPTS

£50,944.34

£48,340.95

PAYMENTS

ONGOING COSTS

Professional fees - Conductor/Accompanist £18,888.34 £17,080.00

Rehearsal Hall Hire £2,925.00 £2,520.00

Making Music £510.00 £449.00

Insurance (via Making Music) £155.00 £135.00

Accounting software (Club Treasurer) £72.00 £72.00

Bank Charges / Sum Up / Ticketsource - £344.00

Sum up charges £60.62 -

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Ticketsource charges | £419.45 | - |
| Website costs | £22.79 | £16.00 |
| <u>CONCERT COSTS</u> | | |
| Soloists (vocal) | £3,000.00 | £2,600.00 |
| Musicians (orchestra/accompanists) | £3,695.00 | £11,971.00 |
| Hire of Concert Venues | £3,620.50 | £2,334.00 |
| Concert Staging | £1,040.00 | £1,953.00 |
| Printing: Flyers/Posters | £339.22 | - |
| Printing: Programmes | £476.22 | £293.00 |
| Publicity | £8.00 | £848.00 |
| Bar stock (& licence in 23/24) | £660.89 | £570.90 |
| Bar licence | £105.00 | - |
| Gifts for artists | £115.25 | £133.00 |
| Music hire/purchase | £208.67 | £261.00 |
| Misc - Concerts | - | £646.00 |
| <u>OTHER OUTGOINGS</u> | | |
| Choir coaching | - | £275.00 |
| Rehearsal refreshments costs | £126.94 | £239.00 |
| Purchase of Equipment (not for resale) | £74.64 | £120.00 |
| Donations to charitable causes | £3,000.00 | - |
| Sundry Non-Concert Costs | £77.99 | £60.00 |
| Folder Purchase | £202.25 | - |
| TOTAL PAYMENTS | £39,803.77 | £42,919.90 |
| EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS | £11,140.57 | |
| Current Account Balance at 1 Sept 2024 | £28,208.78 | |
| Deposit Account Balance at 1 Sept 2024 | 3283.75 | |
| Tour Account Balance at 1 Sept 2024 | £8,535.96 | |
| cash | £33.00 | |
| Excess of receipts over payments | £11,140.57 | |
| | £51,202.06 | |
| <u>ACCOUNT BALANCES 2025</u> | | |
| Current Account Balance at 31 August 2025 | £9,028.69 | |
| Deposit Account Balance at 31 August 2025 | £33,421.86 | |
| Tour Account Balance at 31 August 2025 | £8,655.96 | |
| Cash float | £85.68 | |
| | £51,192.19 | |
| <u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u> | | |
| late invoice/early subs payments/venue deposits 25/6 | -£2,933.00 | |
| TOTAL ASSETS BALANCE | £48,259.19 | |

CASH ACCOUNT

| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Held in cash float | £85.68 |
|--------------------|--------|

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

2024/25

RECEIPTS

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Interest | £275.83 |
| Transfer from Current Account | £25,000.00 |
| Donation - Bequest | £5,000.00 |
| Sundry receipt | £150.00 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £30,425.83 |

PAYMENTS

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Transfer to current account | -£300.00 |
| | <hr/> |
| | -£300.00 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS | £30,125.83 |
|----------------------------------|------------|

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|----------------------------------|------------|
| Account Balance at 1 Sept 2024 | £3,296.03 |
| Excess of receipts over payments | £30,125.83 |
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|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Account Balance at 31 August 2024 | £33,421.86 |
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TOUR ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

2024/25

RECEIPTS

| | |
|---|---------|
| Interest | £120.00 |
| transfer from another account (former CD a/c) | £641.37 |

| | |
|----------|-------|
| PAYMENTS | £0.00 |
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|----------------------------------|---------|
| EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS | £761.37 |
|----------------------------------|---------|

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|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Account Balance at 1 Sept 2024 | £7,894.59 |
| Excess of receipts over payments | £731.84 |
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|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Account Balance at 31 August 2025 | £8,626.43 |
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|---|-------------------|-------------------|--|--|
| THE LONDON FOREST CHOIR | | | | |
| Registered Charity No. 272799 | | | | |
| | | | | |
| <u>STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES</u> | | | | |
| as at | | | | |
| Friday 29th August 2025 | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | 2024/25 | 2023/24 | | |
| | | | | |
| <u>CASH FUNDS</u> (see Receipts & Payments Accounts) | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Deposit Account | £33,421.86 | £3,283.75 | | |
| Current Account | £9,028.69 | £28,208.78 | | |
| *Tour Account | £8,655.96 | £8,535.96 | | |
| Cash float | £85.68 | £33.00 | | |
| Current Liabilities | -£2,933.00 | -£2,942.87 | | |
| | | | | |
| LFC ASSETS | £48,259.19 | £37,118.62 | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| *A balance of £8535.96 is held on behalf of members in the Tour Account as contingency reserve for future tours | | | | |

Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of The London Forest Choir

I report on the accounts of The London Forest Choir
for the year ended 31 August 2025.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts: you consider that the audit requirement of the appropriate section of the Charities Act 1993 does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified by the Charity Commissioners, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

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 the Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 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.

John Mansfield ACIB, Dip.FS, ACIM
28 Coppens Green, Wickford SS12 9PA

Date: