



# TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Year ended 31st August 2023

*Registered Charity No. 277544*

## Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st Aug 2023

### Reference and Administration details

Charity Name: North London Chorus

Registered Charity Number: 277544

Principal Address: 31 Meadow Place, London SW8 1XZ

Trustees & Elected Committee Members: Gary Bilkus (Chair), Alison Salisbury (Hon Secretary), Alan Chandler (Hon Treasurer), Shaun Davies, Lucy Ellis, Kate Hodgkin, David Stone - all for the full year, Viv Canter and Tessa Patel from 26/01/23.

Co-opted Committee Members: None

Musical Director: Murray Hipkin (also present at Committee)

Committee Members for part of choir year: Abigail Dolan (to 20/09/22), Vicky Faure Walker (to 26/01/23)

Principal Bankers: CAF Bank Limited, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Mailing, Kent, ME19 4JQ

Independent Examiner: Chaweevan Williams FCCA, Verdant Accountants Limited

### Structure, Governance and Management

#### Governing Document

Constitution as amended 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

#### Organisational Structure

The Chorus is managed by a committee as detailed above. All members of the Committee are elected by the Chorus at its Annual General Meeting and hold office until the following AGM. All Committee members offer their services on a voluntary basis. The Chorus employs no staff but contracts for the services of the Musical Director and Accompanist. The Chorus is not connected to other charities. New Trustees / Elected Committee Members are recruited within the ranks of the choir and are encouraged to stand for Committee at the AGM. According to the Constitution, a maximum of 6 out of 10 Committee Members can remain without standing for re-election the following year. This encourages rotation of membership and "new blood" within the ranks of the Committee. All elected Committee members are Trustees also.

### Objectives and Activities

In accordance with the Constitution, the Chorus aims to promote, develop and maintain the public's appreciation and education in the art and science of music. Focusing on choral music, it performs concerts, and holds workshops for its members. In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance on public benefit and fee charging. The Chorus relies on income subscriptions to cover its operating costs. In setting the level of subscriptions, the trustees give careful consideration to the accessibility of the Chorus for those on low incomes and in these circumstances reduced subscriptions are available.

North London Chorus is a Public Benefit Entity and as such is committed to enabling as many people as possible to benefit through choir membership, participation in workshops and concert attendance. To this end, a varied programme of music is undertaken to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. More specific details of our activities, which benefit the public, can be found in our Musical Director's and Chair's reports.

These objectives remain the same for the coming year.

### Financial Position

The Financial Statements and accompanying notes on pages 6-10 give a detailed account of the main drivers of the finances of the Chorus. In summary, we started the year with net assets of £6,312 and ended with £8,495 making a surplus of £2,183. The Committee managed the reserves in accordance with the policy described below, through careful cost control, realistic concert budgets and contributions from outside and within the choir. The net resources carried forward at 31 August 2023 represent a sufficient level of reserves. The Committee continues to monitor reserve levels carefully as we cross into the new financial year.

### Reserves Policy

Reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of resources, to cover other costs including unplanned emergency cancellation of concerts at short notice resulting in costs but no revenue and to fund new developments as agreed by the Trustees, from time to time. The Trustees' policy is thus to ensure normal expenditures are matched by a sufficient level of income and that an appropriate level of reserves is maintained to enable the Chorus to function, to allow for unforeseen contingencies and to fund new initiatives to develop its work in accordance with its aims and objectives in a manner that does not present undue risk to the choir's financial position. The Trustees will act to increase the level of reserves where significant expenditure or increased risks are foreseen.

**Chair’s Annual Report**

**Sept 2022 – Aug 2023**

I am pleased to be able to report a very successful year for the Chorus. Although our numbers have not yet returned to full strength, we have demonstrated our continued ability to perform not only our traditional repertoire but also larger scale and challenging works such as *A Sea Symphony*, and to attract a full and appreciative audience.

It is also nice to note that our regular venue at St James has returned to normal after the building work, although the maximum seating capacity in the full-priced central area has been reduced, and a shortage of physical chairs has caused a few headaches.

For a variety of personal reasons, I was unable to participate fully in choir activities during the Summer term, and my thanks for keeping things going in my absence go to David who stood in as Deputy Chair, as well as Shaun and Marcus, in particular on the day of the Summer concert.

My report last year mentioned the sad deaths of choir stalwarts Tony Shelton and Marian Bunzl, both of whom contributed enormously to NLC as singers, active participants and committee members and not least, in very different ways, at our annual Cabaret. The November concert was dedicated to Tony, and the July one to Marian.

On a much happier note, the March concert celebrated Murray’s 20th anniversary with NLC as well as being a much delayed marking of his 60th birthday just before covid lockdown.

A major concern during the year was a consequence of the shocking news that the ENO was losing much of its funding, and as a result Murray Hipkin, our Musical Director found himself facing considerable uncertainty, and his need to find additional work meant that he was sadly unable to rehearse and conduct the Summer Concert.

We had originally hoped that this year would see the return of our traditional residential weekends, but the greatly increased costs of hotel facilities led to a decision instead to hold a non-residential weekend event, in which a full day and a half of activities in Muswell Hill in February allowed us to benefit from the same excellent musical opportunities and social environment at a much more affordable price.

With an effective committee and a largely smooth-running programme, we have been able to focus more on the challenges of effective marketing, fundraising and recruitment, with notable success, although we remain under strength in terms of number of singers, particularly in the lower voices.

My thanks, as always to the committee for its support and hard work, and to all the other members and supporters who have given freely of their time and expertise throughout the year, and especially on concert days.

And to our professionals, Musical Director Murray Hipkin, Accompanist Catherine Borner, and Yvette Bonner and Mark Oldfield, Vocal Consultants.

Gary Bilkus, Chair - February 2024

### **Musical Director's Review (2022/23 Season)**

The 2022-23 season began with a repeat performance of one of Handel's most demanding choral pieces *Dixit Dominus*. The piece was selected in order to make the most of our soprano section (the work is in five parts) which had benefited at the start of the season from several accomplished new members.

Paired with Charpentier *Messe de minuit* it was a ideal pre-Christmas programme and I noted in my message to the choir afterwards that it felt to me as though we had finally returned to our pre-pandemic standards, each concert better than the one before. We were accompanied by the exceptional musicians of the Meridian Sinfonia, on period instruments and the concert is definitely a highlight of my tenure with the choir.

As was the spring concert, which was originally planned for my 60th birthday celebration in 2020 but which, of course, had to be postponed. Happily for me it turned into a double celebration as last spring marked my 20th anniversary with the choir. We gave a stunning performance of Vaughan Williams *A Sea Symphony*, which had been on my bucket list for years.

Working with one of the largest orchestras we have ever engaged and with a pair of star soloists, Verity Wingate and James Cleverton, the choir rose to the occasion splendidly, and I wrote afterwards that "the whole evening was delivered with such confidence and commitment, which has been commented on by many from the audience. From the first explosion of sound to the muted cadences of the final farewells, it was a magical and moving performance..."

### **Musical Director's Review (2022/23 Season)**

In 2023 I was appointed musical director of the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in Buxton. A clash with rehearsals for that meant that I was not available to conduct the NLC summer concert, but I am delighted to say that my place was taken by my ENO colleague Chris Hopkins, who delivered a sparkling summer concert of highlights from the world of opera and musical theatre.

Joined by three wonderful soloists and accompanied by Catherine Borner, it was a fun and entertaining evening and I am very glad that the train gods allowed me to make it to the second half. The afternoon relaxed performance was also a great success, and we were delighted to welcome members of the local community who might not otherwise have many opportunities to hear live music, including quite a few young children.

As usual, my thanks to the committee and in particular the chair Gary Bilkus and his deputy David Stone for steering the choir through this year of recovery after the traumatic events of the Covid pandemic.

Murray Hipkin - Musical Director,  
February 2024




**north london chorus**  
 patrons Janis Kelly • Laurence Cummings  
 musical director Murray Hipkin

*Meridian Sinfonia*



**Handel**  
*Dixit Dominus*  
**Corelli**  
*Concerto grosso in G minor*  
*'Fatto per la Notte di Natale'*  
**Charpentier**  
*Messe de Minuit pour Noël*

**Saturday 3 December 7:30pm**  
**St James Church, London N10 3DB**

soprano Eloise Irving  
 soprano Susanna Fairburn  
 counter-tenor Iestyn Morris  
 tenor Ben Thapa  
 bass TBC  
 conductor Murray Hipkin  
 North London Chorus  
 Meridian Sinfonia

book: [northlondonchorus.org/tickets](http://northlondonchorus.org/tickets)  
 £25 · £21 · £13 Concs £2 off  
 or: Les Aldrich Music Shop, Muswell Hill  
 or: St James Church bookshop  
 Registered charity (no. 277544)




**north london chorus**  
 patrons Janis Kelly • Laurence Cummings  
 musical director Murray Hipkin

*Meridian Sinfonia*

**Ralph Vaughan Williams**  
**A Sea Symphony**

**Saturday 22 April 7:45pm**  
**St James Church, London N10 3DB**

Doors open 6.45pm  
 Bar open before and after the performance

soprano Verity Wingate  
 baritone James Cleverton  
 conductor Murray Hipkin

North London Chorus  
 Meridian Sinfonia

book: [northlondonchorus.org/tickets](http://northlondonchorus.org/tickets)  
 £25 · £21 · £13  
 Concs £2 off  
 or: St James Church bookshop




**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS FOUNDATION**  
 Registered charity (no. 277544)


**north london chorus**  
 patrons Janis Kelly and Laurence Cummings  
 musical director Murray Hipkin



**A Night at the Opera**

*Arias and choruses from favourite operas and operettas*

**Saturday 22 July 2023**  
**St James Church, Muswell Hill, N10 3DB**

soprano Sarah-Jane Lewis  
 tenor David Webb  
 bass-baritone/compere John Savournin  
 piano Catherine Borner  
 conductor Chris Hopkins

<b>5-6pm</b>	<b>7.30pm</b>
<b>relaxed performance</b>	<b>full performance</b>
<b>4.30pm refreshments</b>	<b>£25 · £21 · £13</b>
<b>£10 · U12s £1</b>	<b>Concs £2 off</b>
<b>Concs £5 off</b>	

book: [northlondonchorus.org/tickets](http://northlondonchorus.org/tickets)  
 or: St James Church bookshop  
[northlondonchorus.org](http://northlondonchorus.org)  
 Registered charity (no. 277544)



# Statement of Financial Activities - Summarised

North London Chorus

For the year ended 31 August 2023

	2023	2022
<b>Rehearsals and Administration</b>		
<b>Subscriptions related income</b>		
Subscriptions received	16,190	14,690
Income tax recovered on deeds of covenant	3,457	3,071
<b>Total Subscriptions related income</b>	<b>19,647</b>	<b>17,761</b>
Hall hire - rehearsals	(4,847)	(3,398)
Professional fees - rehearsals	(13,645)	(11,500)
Insurance and Making Music membership	(713)	(653)
Administration & Other	(1,391)	(2,730)
Depreciation expense	(100)	(60)
<b>Net incoming / (outgoing) resources</b>	<b>(1,049)</b>	<b>(578)</b>
<b>Concerts</b>		
Tickets, programmes and advertising	19,677	11,351
Concert-specific funding	4,986	-
Professional fees - concerts	(18,665)	(13,819)
Instrument & music hire	(803)	(1,745)
Concert venue costs	(2,580)	(2,638)
Flowers	(400)	(275)
Printing & publicity	(1,465)	(1,237)
Concert - other costs	(996)	(1,121)
<b>Net incoming / (outgoing) resources</b>	<b>(246)</b>	<b>(9,484)</b>
<b>Other</b>		
Other donations and net fundraising income	604	243
Other income incl. coffee & raffles	954	-
Annual sponsorship	1,500	1,250
Friends of NLC Revenue	420	458
<b>Net incoming / (outgoing) resources</b>	<b>3,478</b>	<b>1,951</b>
<b>Total surplus / (deficit)</b>	<b>2,183</b>	<b>(8,111)</b>

The Statement of Financial Activities details the expenditure incurred and revenues received by the Chorus during the year to 31 August 2023.

In summary, the main reasons we have gone from a deficit of £8,111 the previous year to a surplus of £2,183 this year are: i) more members generating more subscriptions, ii) healthier concert revenues as we dispensed with social distancing, iii) not incurring as much administration cost as there were a few one offs the previous year such as the filming of a concert video, member recruitment ads, and purchase of PPE, iv) raising concert specific funding as detailed below, v) the welcome return of the tea break at choir rehearsals generated £954 over the choir year, vi) choosing the programming carefully and so the Summer concert was less costly and actually made a surplus by itself which is quite unusual.

The total expenditure incurred by the Chorus during the year was £45,604. Of that amount £20,695 was spent on rehearsals and administration and £24,909 on concerts. Income during the year was £47,788. Of this, £19,647 was from subscriptions related income, £24,663 from concerts and concert-specific funding and £3,478 from fundraising and sponsorship. £3,457 of Income tax recovered on deeds of covenant was included within the subscriptions related income; all relevant Gift Aid had been claimed from HMRC by the year end.

Professional fees for rehearsals include the cost of our Musical Director, Accompanist and Vocal Consultants.

Administration costs include £300 for the costs of accounting software, a fee of £250 for the Independent Examination of the accounts, £200 in bank and card processing charges (net of interest received), as well as a range of other smaller expenses to support the running of the choir.

Depreciation of £100 represents the annual allocation of the cost of our assets (amplifier, transparent banner and lighting), spread over their estimated periods of use.

Of the £24,663 concert revenues for this year, £16,677 was generated from ticket sales, £1,196 from programme sales, £530 from programme advertising revenue and £1,274 from the bar and £4,986 from concert specific funding. This funding was raised specifically for the Spring 2023 concert, to support our performance of Vaughan Williams' A Sea Symphony. We are grateful for the grant we received from the Vaughan Williams Foundation (£2,000), from a collection of donations (including gift aid) celebrating our Musical Director Murray Hipkin's 60th birthday (£2,086), and from Murray Hipkin directly (£900) to sponsor the cost of the soloists, in memory of his late father Richard Hipkin.

The majority of the £18,665 professional fees for concerts relates to orchestra fees (£11,260). The type of costs in "concerts – other costs" have always included a small crew at the venues to help with the heavy lifting (humpers) and extra choral support (bumpers) as well as our licence to operate a bar. In addition this year, this category included the hire of folding acoustic screens and the fee for an assistant conductor who carried out sound balance work, both for the Spring 2023 concert.

Other donations of £604 relate general donations from various members and friends to support the choir, nearly half of which was generated from a tabletop sale at choir rehearsals. The Friends of NLC initiative brought in net revenue of £420. The welcome return of the tea break at choir rehearsals generated £954 over the choir year. The Chorus gratefully acknowledges receipt of £1,500 from its ongoing sponsors Goodman Jones and Nimrod Capital.

# Balance Sheet - Summarised

## North London Chorus

### As at 31 August 2023

	31 AUG 2023	31 AUG 2022
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Equipment	180	119
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	13,019	8,446
Amounts recoverable by NLC	391	83
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>13,409</b>	<b>8,529</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Amounts payable by NLC	5,094	2,336
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>8,495</b>	<b>6,312</b>
<b>Total Reserves</b>		
Net resources brought forward	6,312	14,423
Current Year Earnings	2,183	(8,111)
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>8,495</b>	<b>6,312</b>

The Balance Sheet lists the Chorus's assets and liabilities as at the close of the financial year on 31 August 2023.

#### Fixed Assets

The Chorus owns an amplifier, a transparent banner and lighting. These assets are included in the balance sheet at cost less accumulated depreciation.

#### Current Assets

Amounts recoverable by NLC of £391 relate to small amounts owed to NLC at the year end - £206 owed by the members for scores purchased for the Winter 2023 concert, £110 owed by advertisers in the concert programme, £75 representing the deposit we hold with St James Church.

#### Current Liabilities

Amounts payable by NLC of £5,094 mostly relates to subscriptions paid by members in advance of the new choir year (£4,523) as well as regular bills yet to be paid. Most of the previous year's amount (£2,086 of £2,336) related to amounts raised for the Spring 2023 concert via Murray Hipkin's 60th birthday fund (including Gift Aid) which was then spent this year.

#### Net Resources

The Committee aims to maintain a level of net resources in accordance with the policy described in the Trustees' report. The net resources carried forward at 31 August 2023 of £8,495 represent a sufficient level of reserves. The Committee continues to monitor reserve levels carefully as we cross into the new financial year.

Approved by the Committee on 19th December 2023 and signed on its behalf by



Alan Chandler (FCCA)  
Treasurer

**Notes to the Accounts**

1. Basis of preparation

1.1 Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with:

- the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with
- the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and with
- the Charities Act 2011.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

1.2 Going concern

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the North London Chorus’s ability to continue as a going concern. There are no material uncertainties affecting the current year’s accounts.

1.3 Change of accounting policy

The accounts present a true and fair view and the accounting policies adopted are those outlined in note 2. There have been no changes in approach compared to last year.

2. Accounting Policies

2.1 Income

a) Recognition of income

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

- the charity becomes entitled to the resources;
- it is more likely than not that the trustees will receive the resources; and
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

b) Tax reclaims on donations and gifts

Gift Aid receivable is included in income when there is a valid declaration from the donor. Any Gift Aid amount recovered on a donation is considered to be part of that gift and is treated as an addition to the same fund as the initial donation unless the donor or the terms of the appeal have specified otherwise.



**Notes to the Accounts (continued)**

2. Accounting Policies (continued)

2.2 Expenditure and Liabilities

a) Liability recognition

Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.

b) Deferred income

No material item of deferred income has been included in the accounts.

c) Creditors

North London Chorus has creditors which are measured at settlement amounts less any trade discounts.

d) Provisions for liabilities

A liability is measured on recognition at its historical cost and then subsequently measured at the best estimate of the amount required to settle the obligation at the reporting date.

2.3 Assets

a) Tangible fixed assets for use by charity

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year, and cost at least £100. They are valued at cost. The depreciation rates and methods used are disclosed in note 5.

b) Debtors

Debtors (including trade debtors and loans receivable) are measured on initial recognition at settlement amount after any trade discounts or amount advanced by the charity. Subsequently, they are measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be received.

3. Analysis of Income

All income received was unrestricted apart from £4,986 which is shown on the face of the accounts as concert specific funding. This was raised specifically for the Spring 2023 concert, to support our performance of Vaughan Williams’ *A Sea Symphony*. We are grateful for the grant we received from the Vaughan Williams Foundation (£2,000), from a collection of donations (including gift aid) celebrating our Musical Director Murray Hipkin’s 60th birthday (£2,086), and from Murray Hipkin directly (£900) to sponsor the cost of the soloists, in memory of his late father Richard Hipkin.

4. Details of certain items of expenditure

Independent examiner’s fees were £250.

## Notes to the Accounts (continued)

### 5. Fixed Assets

Details	Year purchased	Cost or valuation b/f	Additions	Total cost	Accumulated depreciation brought fwd	Net book value at start year	Depreciation in year (straight line basis)	Accumulated depreciation carried fwd	Net book value at year end
Amplifier	2020	£119.00	-	£119.00	£59.50	£59.50	£29.75	£89.25	£29.75
Transparent banners	2020	£119.94	£0.00	£119.94	£59.98	£59.96	£29.99	£89.97	£29.97
Lighting	2023	-	£159.98	£159.98	-	-	£40.00	£40.00	£119.98
<b>Total</b>		<b>£238.94</b>	<b>£159.98</b>	<b>£398.92</b>	<b>£119.48</b>	<b>£119.46</b>	<b>£99.74</b>	<b>£219.22</b>	<b>£179.70</b>

### 6. Debtors and prepayments

These comprise of amounts recoverable by NLC and prepayments and are disclosed separately on the face of the balance sheet.

### 7. Creditors and accruals

These comprise of amounts payable by NLC and are disclosed separately on the face of the balance sheet.

### 8. Cash at bank and in hand

This comprises of only cash at bank and in hand as North London Chorus holds no short term cash investments or short term deposits.

### 9. Transactions with trustees and related parties

#### a) Trustee remuneration and benefits

None of the trustees have been paid any remuneration or received any other benefits from an employment with their charity or a related entity.

#### b) Trustees' expenses

No trustee expenses have been incurred.

#### c) Transaction(s) with related parties

There have been no related party transactions in the reporting period.

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

### Report to the trustees of North London Chorus Charity no. 277544.

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above Charity for the year ended 31 August 2023 which are set out on pages 6-10.

### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

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

### Independent examiner's statement

- (1) I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention which in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:
- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
  - the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.
  - the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.
- (2) 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.



**Chaweevan Williams FCCA**  
Verdant Accountants  
Chartered Certified Accountants  
167 Clarence Avenue, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3TX

**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024