

CSO AGM 2024: Report of the Chair

Introduction

Welcome to this year's CSO AGM Chair's report.

It's been a good year for the CSO in many ways, fantastic concerts, stabilised finances, and sorting a few of issues that had slightly unravelled – particularly around programming. I'm particularly grateful to our Programming Committee and their new chair for their patience and hard work.

We've also made progress with our online communications, especially the work on the website and the members webpages. We can now easily make suggestions and find information that we need about the Orchestra and our concert plans.

Some Changes and Thanks

As you know, this is my last year as your Chair. After 5 years (including the Covid period) I'm reevaluating many things in my life in terms of time and work-life balance, and it's time to hand on. Perhaps not surprisingly it been difficult to find a replacement, but I hope by the time this is shared as part of the AGM preparations we will have at least one candidate. I will of course continue to help where needed behind the scenes.

There are too many people to thank personally for their help over the last year – (and the previous 4 years), but I must single out our Orchestra Manager, Judith Houghton, who has done so much and particularly helped me over the time I have been Chair. Thank you to everyone for your personal support – you have made my task over the years so much easier.

Many hands make light work, and contribution in supporting the Committee, either as a committee member or in other ways, is absolutely vital to our future. I know you have busy lives, jobs, families and other music or leisure commitments. But so do the Committee, so please consider if you can personally do a bit more for your orchestra.

As with every year, there are some changeovers of players, and I do want to mention Dave Kendal who retired as our tuba player after 48 years. He will be missed, but I know will remain a staunch CSO supporter.

Money

Following Covid, the CSO like many organisations has faced significant challenges. Audience habits had changed, we had to dip into reserves to honour commitments, and our costs also rose sharply, with inflation biting. We needed to

rethink costs and income, whilst not detracting from our need to restart and to celebrate our 50th anniversary.

Under the stewardship of our Treasurer, and with your help, our finances are now stabilised. For the first year since before the pandemic we have begun to replenish our reserves, and subscriptions have risen by less than inflation.

With concert costs under control, programming strongly appealing to audiences, and modest increases in subscriptions, I am confident that we are now in a strong position going forward and we can begin to consider new and more ambitious programmes if we wish.

There is still more we can do to further strengthen our financial position, but that depends on everyone's help in publicising concerts, reaching out to new audiences and supporting work to see if we can create new income streams.

I'm delighted that Louise Coggins has taken up the challenge of researching and coordinating wider sponsorship and grants. It is far from easy to secure money from new sources, and we have limited progress this year, with one sponsor. I remain convinced that there is an opportunity, especially as we raise our profile, and if everyone supports Louise by providing openings and ideas that we can pursue through our many connections.

Open Evening

We held our members' open evening again in July, the 3rd time of doing so. This has proved to be a great opportunity to talk about plans, ideas, and to get member's feedback in a relaxed and un-scripted conversation and is always well-attended (a good indicator that it is valuable).

I've summarised the discussions we had this year in a note sent to everyone which is on our members' webpages, (so I won't repeat them here). But we covered a wide range of ideas, issues and your feedback which the Committee then consider in future plans and for this AGM.

I do want to thank you all for your active involvement (including criticism). I genuinely have found your feedback helpful over the last 5 years, whether at the open evening or by email, and I hope I've always managed to get everyone a personal reply. It is particularly helpful to hear when we have not quite got things right – we (the Committee) usually know, but not always, and it is a chance to correct things.

Members Web Pages

Our member's webpages were launched at the last AGM. Since then, Debbie Hickson has taken over the management of the CSO website as a whole, as well as making even more improvements to our member's pages.

It's a great achievement, and you can now make your programming suggestions there as well as find out what's going on, orchestra etiquette, archives, rehearsal schedules and more. I hope it will gradually become the 'go to' place for new

members, and anyone wanting to know how to get more involved or find out about our plans.

In particular I would urge everyone to use the site to make your programming suggestions. The Programming Committee are already using these and it's very easy.

P.S. If you can't remember the password... HINT: it's the name it's our name plus the date of an important overture.

Programming Committee

The Programming Committee has perhaps the most important function in the orchestra in setting the repertoire for the orchestra, and it is no mean feat to balance a range of competing interests and constraints.

I want to record special thanks to our Programming Committee this year and to Penny Burnett in particular as Chair, for their patience and hard work. It has also not been without challenges this year, which we discussed at the Open Evening.

We've also had a joint Committee and Programming Committee meeting recently, which was very helpful in planning ahead and determining priorities and programming guidelines. I hope, after some 'turbulence' things can settle down on programming and that the Programming Committee once again feel in control of the agenda.

Reducing costs has meant a rethink about our programming, and we have shown that lower-cost concerts can be very popular, as with our for Dvorak concert at Turner Sims, which was a sellout and the biggest financial success of the year. Playing music that is popular with audiences does not mean that we 'dumb down' or pander to popularism.

I am of the view of shorter, less known but exciting classics, coupled with more recognised pieces is the way forward. This can include a mix of concertos and thematic concerts (film nights, opera nights etc). So, what are your views?

I am also delighted that Sue Edmonds has agreed to stay on as librarian; Sue does such an amazing job in keeping our cost down and ensuring that we source music in the best possible way.

Marketing, Brand and Communications

Marketing is a key priority looking ahead in my opinion. There is so much more I think we could be doing to develop our marketing and wider 'brand' awareness, helping to fill concert calls and reducing financial pressure.

We are now publishing programmes further ahead which helps, and we are giving more thought to marketing, led by Wayne Landen. But and he needs support from all of us if we are to be successful.

These days there are so many competing events, as well as demands on our time and for our audiences. We could just spend money on more advertising, but

this is expensive and not always good value. So, everyone needs to do their bit in promoting concerts for example – distributing posters, sharing fliers, ‘word of mouth’, social media, work and family connections.

One challenge is to widen our appeal and our visibility; our concerts often attract the same audience groups, and to widen our appeal we need to differentiate ourselves from other orchestras. Please let Wayne and the committee know your thoughts – what we could do better, more of, or less of, in order to raise our profile. The key is making the most use of our various networks and contacts.

Concerts and Rehearsals

We’ve had 5 concerts over the last year, each contrasting and offering new challenges and exciting music to rehearse and perform:

November 2023, Thornden Hall	We played Brahms Tragic Overture, the Saint Saëns’s piano concerto No. 2 with pianist Thomas Luke, and the Nielsen Symphony No. 2. A fantastic programme appealing to everyone. Thomas was a lovely soloist to play with – a sensitive and energetic performance that was thrilling for everyone.
Family concert January 2024	As ever, our ‘family’ concert was a great success – Peter and the Wolf, Carnival of the Animals and more. We have been considering some changes for the future however, including a new date (there are now too many competing ‘family concerts’ in December and January). The Programming and Main Committees have reviewed the criteria for the family concert – including our target audience and purpose.
March 2024, Thornden Hall	With our very popular and enthusiastic guest conductor Lucia Švecová, we played Mendelsohn’s Hebrides Overture, Grieg’s Pier Gynt Suite, Dvorak’s New World Symphony and Sibelius’ Finlandia. What’s not to like? This was a sell-out concert and our most financially successful event of the year.
May 2024, Thornden Hall	We were back in Thornden with John Traill at the baton and Charlie Lovell-Jones a brilliant concert of Walton’s Violin Concerto, Holst’s ‘Perfect Fool’, and Vaughan William’s London Symphony. I was in the audience, and I have to say it was some of the best playing from the CSO. Charlie was of course spectacular, but the whole concert was tremendous.
July 2024, Romsey Abbey	John Traill was conducting, and we played the Amy Beach Gaelic Symphony and Schubert’s 9 th (Great) Symphony. A huge and demanding concert, which the CSO rose to with confidence and the performance was widely seen as a big success.
Music in the City, Art Gallery Southampton	Ian Partridge was our conductor for a double symphony concert – Haydn no. 104 (his last), and Beethoven’s first symphony. The standard of playing was exceptionally high, the audience hugely appreciative, and it makes a change to be playing smaller works in a smaller space.

Committee and other Roles

The CSO can only function with a lot of help from everyone. I do know that the support that many of you already bring is wide and varied, and often not as visible as some of the committee roles. Thank you so much for what you do, but of course I would like to ask you all for more.

I have spoken to many of you who tell me that you have busy jobs, family commitments, and many other musical commitments. I do understand this, and that is true of the majority of committee members; but please, if you can, could I ask you to consider if you can find a way to give that little bit extra back to support the Orchestra we love, if you are not already involved beyond playing.

We often need simple help in a variety of ways, not just committee roles, but also general support. This includes things like helping to set up and clear up after concerts, liaising with stewards, marketing, supporting social events or helping committee members with the jobs they have.

Our Orchestra Manager needs more help behind the scenes too, so we are asking for at least two assistants who can take on some minor duties to reduce the burden. It does not need to be onerous or a formal committee job.

Two Committee positions also need filling – the Secretary role and chair. I hope we will get nominations at the AGM.

I confirmed I at the last AGM would be stepping down this year as Chair. I have enjoyed the time I have spent in the role, and I hope I have brought some new ideas. Covid was not easy, and financial challenges have taken up time, but with your help we have moved forward, and I have many fond memories. I'm happy to help someone to prepare to take on the role.

A Word About Standards

I know it can be a sensitive topic, and always raised at the open evening. There is an important balance to be struck between formality and informality, socialising and serious playing. Mostly I believe we get it right. Sometimes we don't, and inevitably some people have slightly different views.

It will be for a new Chair, with our orchestra manager, our principal conductor and orchestra leader to ensure we keep the right balance. But I wanted to share with you my personal views, as your outgoing Chair, particularly to close off the discussions for now.

Firstly, **etiquette** in rehearsals and concerts really does matter. It enhances both our playing and our enjoyment of making music together. We now have some clear guidance on our member web pages which I think is very helpful.

I also wanted to mention **practice**. The CSO aims to set high standards as an amateur community orchestra – probably the highest in the region. The harder the music we play (and sometimes it is hard!), the older you get (and I speak

from experience) the more rehearsals you miss (please try not to), and the less proficient you are (we are all on a spectrum), determines how much practice you need to do. That's just how it is, and practice is (mostly) fun. If you are a wind or brass player you will understand this entirely, but if you're in a large group of strings, you are still not hidden (again, I speak from experience).

At the same time, rehearsals should always be fun – if sometimes hard work. We spend far more time in rehearsals than in concerts. It's particularly important that we welcome and encourage new members, helping them to understand etiquette and expectations in a supportive way. Sometimes in the fray of a rehearsal, it is easy to forget that someone new might find it all a bit daunting. So, we need to make sufficient time to welcome them and check they are being looked after.

Above all, it is vital that we remain a friendly and social community orchestra. So, if anyone ever feels unhappy at any point never hesitate to have a quiet word. Our main motivation is enjoying the pleasure of being able to play music together.

Social and Other Activities

We are lucky to have the support of Sue Dancer and Rachel Barlow for arranging our curry evening, and refreshments at events such as the AGM. But should we do more socially – perhaps surrounding informal playing opportunities, or shorter rehearsals linked to a fun musical social theme? Your views would be appreciated.

Some players go to the pub for a quick drink at the Belmore Pub after rehearsals – just pop along and join in (but don't forget to register your numberplate if you park there, or you'll get a fine!).

Members have also suggested that we could do more playing by taking on smaller more informal events, representing the CSO and potentially raising a bit of income. This could include playing in quartets of chamber groups – we can now share ideas on our (yes, again!) member's web pages.

Bernie's Vision

I asked Bernie for a contribution to this annual report. He has come up with the following:

Musical Chairs by Bernie

*Well, folks, the time has come at last,
Our chairman's reign is in the past.
With meetings led and papers signed,
He's moving on—don't look behind!
You kept us going, steered the ship,
With coffee, notes, and many a quip.
But now it's time for someone new,
A fresh face with a fresher view.*





*So here we are, in line we stand,
To give a hearty bear-hugged hand!
Welcome, new chair! Now don't be shy,
We promise not to make you cry.
So, grab that gavel, take your seat,
Let's make this year both bold and sweet!
And to the old chair, one last cheer,
Thanks for all the laughs and beer!*

Well, there you go... what can I say (in so few words)?!

Looking Forward to 2025

Over the last six years there has been a lot of change and challenge. I'm hopefully passing on the Chair role at a time when things are more stable, positive and improving, with new opportunities for the future. I look forward to playing for the foreseeable future but taking a rest from committee duties!

Best wishes everyone!

Jos

City of Southampton Orchestra
"Highlights"
for the 12 Months Ended 31 July 2024

	23/24	22/23	Variance
Concert Income	19,327	15,628	3,699
Concert Costs	18,094	17,100	994
	<u>1,233</u>	<u>-1,472</u>	2,705
Non-concert Income	16,240	14,108	2,132
Non-concert Costs	13,131	14,738	(1,607)
	<u>3,109</u>	<u>-630</u>	3,739
TOTAL	<u>4,342</u>	<u>-2,102</u>	6,444
 SURPLUS FUNDS AT YEAR END	 34,112	 29,770	

City of Southampton Orchestra
Statement of Financial Activities
for the 12 Months Ended 31 July 2024

	Unrestricted Funds 2023-24 £	Unrestricted Funds 2022-23 £
Incoming Resources		
Non-Concert Income		
Subscriptions	11947	10422
Friends	690	540
Donations	500	0
Gift Aid	2589	2674
CDs/books	0	5
Teas Income	95	197
Interest	243	120
Concert Fees	175	0
Sponsorship	0	150
Miscellaneous	0	0
Total Non-Concert Income	16,240	14,108
Concert Income		
Ticket Revenue	18528	15150
Programme Sales	799	478
Total Concert Income	19,327	15,628
Total Incoming Resources	35,567	29,736
Resources Expended		
Non-Concert Expenditure		
Rehearsal Conductor	5895	5680
Rehearsal Hall Hire	3866	4527
Music Hire	1095	2453
Making Music Subscription	384	458
Admin & Stationery	0	141
Marketing - non concert	298	121
Depreciation/loss on disposal	784	872
Miscellaneous	532	251
Bank costs	277	236
Total Non-Concert Expenditure	13,131	14,739
Concert Expenditure		
Conductor - Concert	3900	3150
Soloists	1363	1937
Players Expenses	1115	1085
Hall - Concert	6881	5673
BO Commission	1776	1280
PRS	549	622
Instrument Hire	132	0
Percussion Transport	597	587
Flowers/Drink/Gifts	73	62
Printing Programmes	701	434
Posters	313	214
Mail Shot	104	589
Advertising	590	444
Miscellaneous	0	1022
Total Concert Expenditure	18,094	17,099
Total Resources Expended	31,225	31,838
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources before Other Recognised Gains/(Losses)	4,342	(2,102)
Other Recognised Gains/(Losses)	0.00	0.00
Net Movement in Funds	4,342	(2,102)
Total Funds Brought Forward	29,770	31,872
Total Funds Carried Forward	34,112	29,770

of which:

Concert Related	1,233	(1,471)
Rehearsal & Non-Concert Related	3,109	(631)
Total	4,342	(2,102)

City of Southampton Orchestra
Concert Income & Expenditure
for concert season 2023/24

Concert P&Ls

	Sep 23	Nov 23	Jan 24	Mar 24	May 04	Jul 24	Adjust	2023-24
	Music in the City	Thornden	Central Hall	Turner Sims	Thornden	Romsey Abbey		Total
Concert Income	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Tickets	0	3122	4704	4940	3227	2535		18,528
Programme Sales	0	185	0	272	180	162		799
Programme Advertising								
Sponsorship								
Miscellaneous								
Total Concert Income	0	3,307	4,704	5,212	3,407	2,697	0	19,327
Concert Expenditure								
Conductor - Concert	0	750	1,000	650	750	750		3,900
Soloists	0	613	50	0	700	0		1,363
Players Expenses	0	50	215	150	560	140		1,115
Orchestra costs								
Total Professional Fees	0	1,413	1,265	800	2,010	890	0	6,378
Hall - Concert	0	1,252	1,190	1380	1,080	980		5,882
Venue staffing costs	0	0	859	0	0	140		969
BO Commission	0	375	420	593	388			1,776
PRS	0	74	240	62	74	99		549
Instrument Hire/Purchase/Tune	0	132	0	0	0	0		132
Percussion Transport	0	95	180	89	114	119		587
Flowers/Drink/Gifts	0	11	50	0	12	0		73
Total Venue	0	1,939	2,839	2,124	1,668	1,338	0	10,008
Printing Programmes	0	158	0	237	166	140		701
Posters	0	48	85	59	64	57		313
Mail Shots/FB Boosts	0	41	25		38			104
Advertising/design/artwork	0	76	198	76	150	90		590
Total Publicity	0	323	308	372	418	287	0	1,708
Miscellaneous								
Total Concert Expenditure	0	3,675	4,512	3,296	4,096	2,515	0	18,094
Net Income/(Expenditure)	0	(368)	192	1,916	(689)	182	0	1,233
Cumulative profit/(loss)	0	(368)	(176)	1,740	1,051	1,233		1,233

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City of Southampton Orchestra
Balance Sheet at 31 July 2024

	Total Funds				
	31/07/24	31/07/23	31/07/22	31/07/21	31/07/20
	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Cost	Instruments	Eqpt	Music	T-shirts	Total
Balance at 01/08/23	11,840	1,600	4,354	1,732	19,526
Additions	0	345	62	145	552
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
Balance at 31/07/24	11,840	1,945	4,416	1,877	20,078
Accumulated Depreciation					
Balance at 01/08/23	10,453	978	838	868	13,137
Charge for the year	208	95	351	130	784
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
Balance at 31/07/24	10,661	1,073	1,189	998	13,921
Net Book Value					
Balance at 01/08/23	1,387	623	3,515	864	6,389
Balance at 31/07/24	1,179	872	3,227	879	6,157
Total Fixed Assets	6,157	6,389	7,161	3,388	3,614
Current Assets					
Debtors – Due Within 1 Year					
Prepayments & Accrued Income	3,770	3,160	2,146	2,793	4,945
Cash at Bank & In Hand					
Bank Accounts – RBS & Barclays	24,485	20,866	23,348	35,174	39,228
Cash in hand	99	120	140	140	140
Total Current Assets	28,354	24,146	25,634	38,107	44,313
Liabilities					
Creditors – Due Within 1 Year					
Accruals & Deferred Income	399	765	923	1,575	2,442
Net Current Assets	27,955	23,381	24,711	36,532	41,871
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	34,112	29,770	31,872	39,920	45,485
Creditors – Due After 1 Year	0	0	0	0	0
Net Assets	34,112	29,770	31,872	39,920	45,485
Funds of the Charity					
Unrestricted Funds	34,112	29,770	31,872	39,920	45,485
Total Funds	34,112	29,770	31,872	39,920	45,485

Signed on behalf of the trustees

Trevor Grant

Treasurer

3 October 2024

Jos Creese

Chairman

Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts

I report to the Trustees of the City of Southampton Orchestra on the accounts for the twelve months ended 31 July 2024 set out on the preceding pages.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner's

The Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under Section 43 of the Act);
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the 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 Commissioners. 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 I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the Trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:
 - proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the Act);
 - accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act: or
2. to which, in my opinion, should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Peter RE Hanlon FCIB
35 Horseshoe Drive
Romsey
SO51 7TP

3rd October 2024

City of Southampton Orchestra
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for the 12 Months Ended 31 July 2024

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City of Southampton Orchestra
Concert Income & Expenditure
for concert season 2023/24

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City of Southampton Orchestra
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Cost	Instruments	Eqpt	Music	T-shirts	Total
Balance at 01/08/23	11,840	1,600	4,354	1,732	19,526
Additions	0	345	62	145	552
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
Balance at 31/07/24	11,840	1,945	4,416	1,877	20,078
Accumulated Depreciation					
Balance at 01/08/23	10,453	978	838	868	13,137
Charge for the year	208	95	351	130	784
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
Balance at 31/07/24	10,661	1,073	1,189	998	13,921
Net Book Value					
Balance at 01/08/23	1,387	623	3,515	864	6,389
Balance at 31/07/24	1,179	872	3,227	879	6,157
Total Fixed Assets	6,157	6,389	7,161	3,388	3,614
Current Assets					
Debtors – Due Within 1 Year					
Prepayments & Accrued Income	3,770	3,160	2,146	2,793	4,945
Cash at Bank & In Hand					
Bank Accounts – RBS & Barclays	24,485	20,866	23,348	35,174	39,228
Cash in hand	99	120	140	140	140
Total Current Assets	28,354	24,146	25,634	38,107	44,313
Liabilities					
Creditors – Due Within 1 Year					
Accruals & Deferred Income	399	765	923	1,575	2,442
Net Current Assets	27,955	23,381	24,711	36,532	41,871
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	34,112	29,770	31,872	39,920	45,485
Creditors – Due After 1 Year	0	0	0	0	0
Net Assets	34,112	29,770	31,872	39,920	45,485
Funds of the Charity					
Unrestricted Funds	34,112	29,770	31,872	39,920	45,485
Total Funds	34,112	29,770	31,872	39,920	45,485

Signed on behalf of the trustees

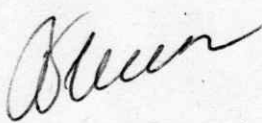
Trevor Grant

Treasurer

3 October 2024

Jos Creese

Chairman



Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts

I report to the Trustees of the City of Southampton Orchestra on the accounts for the twelve months ended 31 July 2024 set out on the preceding pages.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner's

The Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under Section 43 of the Act);
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the 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 Commissioners. 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 I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the Trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:
 - proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the Act);
 - accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act: or
2. to which, in my opinion, should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Peter RE Hanlon FCIB
35 Horseshoe Drive
Romsey
SO51 7TP

3rd October 2024