

HERTFORDSHIRE CHORUS

Annual report and accounts

YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST 2021

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1ST SEPTEMBER 2010 TO 31ST AUGUST 2021

Reference and Administrative Details of the Charity, its Trustees and Advisors

Charity Name	Hertfordshire Chorus
Registered Charity Number	281627
Charity's Principal Address	16 Barncroft Way, St Albans, AL1 5QZ
Trustees of the Charity	Lesley Blankfield (Chair) Paul Harden (Finance Director) Neil Brinkworth Robin Seaman Carole Teacher Evelyn Poulton Jessica Dormer

All Trustees were in post during the whole financial year to which these accounts relate and also at the date this report was approved.

Objectives and Activities

The objective of the Chorus is to promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in and appreciation of music in all its aspects by the presentation of public concerts and recitals to the highest possible standards.

Structure, Governance and Management

The governing document for the Chorus is the Constitution of Hertfordshire Chorus, the latest version of which was approved by an AGM of the members on 30th November 2011 as amended by the EGM on 13 October 2020.

The Chorus is run by a Council of elected members, with annual elections at the time of the AGM. Council members are the Trustees of the Chorus. There is a Chairman, Finance Director and functional directors for each of the principal roles. Whilst the Trustees are elected, it is expected that they will only stand for posts for which they have the requisite knowledge and skills. No officer may serve continuously in the same post for more than six years able to be extended to seven years during periods of exceptional circumstances. Under each of the Trustees are other positions filled by other Chorus Members. Approximately 50% of the Chorus Members are directly involved in helping in this way. The Musical Director attends Council meetings and the Council meets on a regular basis throughout the year.

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties.

Related Parties

There are no contractual transactions with Trustees or related parties to the knowledge of the Trustees. The Trustees have paid certain expenses of the Chorus for which they have been refunded. During the period of Accounts, no Trustees have claimed any personal expenses.

Risk Management

The Trustees have identified the major risks affecting the business of the charity and have established systems to mitigate those risks. In particular, when setting the budget for each year the Trustees consider any factors that could have an adverse impact on the achievement of the budget and make appropriate plans to deal with any such occurrence.

Achievements and Performance: Chair's Report on behalf of the Trustees

The Covid-19 lockdowns during 2020 seriously restricted the ability of Hertfordshire Chorus to function as normal. However, we kept the membership engaged with Zoom rehearsals and meetings, rehearsed in person, with restrictions, between the lockdowns and were delighted to return to in person rehearsals in June 2021. It felt like a miracle that we were able to perform a concert in front of an audience outdoors at Townsend School in St Albans on the 15th July. The concert was free but audience donations from this event topped £500 which was extraordinarily generous.

During the Covid-19 period we did not feel it was appropriate to continue to collect subscriptions but asked for member donations instead. This was so that we could keep our professional colleagues, David Temple MBE and accompanist, Rufus Frowde remunerated though on a reduced fee. All the membership agreed that this was it was important to us to keep the Hertfordshire Chorus family together and to ensure that our professional colleagues were not left adrift with no income. The donations were voluntary and we took into account the impact that Covid-19 had on the financial health of our members. No-one was removed from our list of members even if they could not afford much, or any contribution.

We are now planning for a return to normal operation starting with a concert in St Albans Abbey in October to perform an all Mozart programme which should prove very popular. We will present the Mass in C Minor, Ave Verum Corpus and Solemn Vespers. We look forward to this and anticipate strong sales.

We are planning for the Christmas season and are planning to perform for the Willow Foundation at St Albans Abbey, a carol concert at Hatfield House and the main Chorus carol concert at Haileybury School. These events have always proved popular.

In February we will perform again at St Albans Abbey featuring rarely performed choral music by Elgar and Parry. In 2020 we had to postpone a planned concert of James McCarthy's 'Codebreaker' and Vaughan Williams 'A Sea Symphony' at the Sage in Gateshead in collaboration with Newcastle Choral Society. We are now planning to perform this on 1st May 2022 and are very much looking forward to it.

The Hertfordshire Chorus TV initiative which we kicked off during lockdown, runs on our YouTube channel and has gone from strength to strength. This offering consists of short conversations via Zoom between David Temple and people associated with the musical life of the Chorus. The first recording featured Chorus Council member Robin Seaman who told us about his experience as a boy soloist singing with Benjamin Britten. The second conversation was with Ashley Riches, who sang with the Chorus early in his career and has often returned to us. We have since published two more videos and are very proud of the quality of this new channel.

The Chorus continues to plan its musical output to ensure cost effective use of funds while raising artistic standards and providing an enjoyable and exciting musical experience for the members. Income from member's subscriptions pays for the Chorus's general costs including rehearsals and administration. We will be able to return to generating ticket sales for the next season and continue to plan our output to try to maximise returns. We have a dedicated grants team who have attracted funding of £3000 from the Williams Church Music Trust even in these difficult times. Grants are always a challenge but we are always looking for innovative opportunities for funding.

Our loyal network of Patrons and Friends have continued to support us financially during the lockdowns and we are immensely grateful for their continuing generosity. We suspended formal requests for payment and ensured that all Patrons and Friends remained on the list whether or not they could make a donation. We have recruited 6 new Honorary Music Patrons who represent the very best of international choral music. They all have strong links with the Chorus and include Wayne Marshall, Ashley Riches, Diana Moore, Guy Johnston, Will Todd and James McCarthy. We are very proud to be able to strengthen these prestigious relationships and look forward to working with them all again in the future.

We will return to providing services like wedding choirs, sponsorship, refreshments, and providing guest singers for other choirs. The Chorus lottery, has continued and we have kicked off a new project to raise money for a new commission. We remain keen supporters of other community events and have raised money for the Willow Foundation at Christmas and recorded a video for them to use for their online event.

The new commission is a very exciting project. We have asked Shruthi Rajasekar, a young Indian/American composer to write a piece based on the life of revered Indian poet, Sarojini Naidu. Shruthi is a rising star and we are very pleased to be working with her. The commission project team has attracted £6000 of grant funding from the Arts Council and we are running events like Afternoon Teas and sponsored walks in order to raise funding to stage the premiere which will happen sometime in 2022.

David Temple has continued to audition new members online and we have attracted 9 new singers to the family, including 4 men. We are very pleased to have retained healthy numbers of current members with very few retirements and now have 120 singers on the books. We continue to encourage recruitment and will return to Open Rehearsals, Google advertisements and use of our newly refreshed website to attract new singers.

Against all the odds the Chorus has not just survived the Covid-19 period but thrived and we are very grateful for all the support from Patrons, singers, supporters and Council for all their hard work. We took the decision early on that the Chorus was worth fighting for and we are very proud to see how well we have protected the musical activity of this special group of people.

This has been my third year as Chair and I am grateful to everyone who has supported Hertfordshire Chorus through this difficult time. We continue to review the function of Council and to make sure that work is distributed fairly and performed efficiently. Several Council members will retire in November so we will be actively recruiting new members and trustees to ensure a smooth transition.

Our Musical Director David Temple MBE continues to be an inspiration to singers, an innovative musician and a dedicated champion of excellence in the Chorus. Our accompanist, Rufus Frowde is a great support and has helped to shape our response to one of the biggest challenges any of us have faced. I thank them both for all they do for the Chorus.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley Blankfield".

Lesley Blankfield
Chair, on behalf of the Trustees
2 November 2021

Financial review

In normal times, the Chorus meets its objectives as set out in its Constitution through the promotion of concerts throughout the year. To ensure that these concerts meet the highest possible artistic standards, the Chorus hires professional orchestras and soloists as required. However, the income arising from ticket sales etc. from such concerts is not sufficient to cover their costs. Accordingly, the Musical Director plans the music programme for the season taking into account the financial costs of these orchestral concerts. The fundraising activities of the members of the Chorus, including obtaining grants and sponsorship, support the promotion of these concerts.

The impact of the covid-19 outbreak has been significant for the Chorus and its finances. The Chorus has been unable to promote its usual concert season and consequently has not suffered the losses typically incurred as a result.

During the year the Chorus has been funded by the kind donations of our members, friends, patrons and supporters to enable the Chorus to keep together as a community, including our professionals, which will enable the Chorus to promote a varied selection of concerts for the new season commencing 1 September 2021.

In addition, the continued support of our Patrons and Friends and the efforts of our members have resulted in steady levels of income across most of our fund-raising activities and the continued success of the Grants Team has supported the wide range of music that the choir performs. During the year, the Chorus was successful in obtaining a grant of £3,000 from the Williams Church Music Trust. As the concerts to which the grant relates were planned in the 2021/22 year, this grant will be recognised in the Income Statement next year.

Overall there has been an increase of £15,210 (£12,915 prior year) in the Chorus's total reserves of which £8,228 (£3,631) relates to the New Commission fund which is a restricted fund to pay for new commissions, their performance and other related activities. Total reserves now stand at £61,981 (£46,771) of which £11,859 (£3,631) is in the New Commission Fund.

The Chorus commissioned a new up and coming young composer Shruthi Rajasekar to compose a brand-new work about the life of Sarojini Naidu including western and carnatic music styles. The Chorus was successful in obtaining a grant of £6,000 from the Arts Council in connection with this project, of which £5,400 was received during 2020/21. Additional specific fundraising is planned as part of this exciting project in addition to the Conductor's Circle, which was established to encourage regular donations to the New Commission Fund, so that the Chorus can commission new music in the future with the knowledge that sufficient finances will be available.

This healthy reserve position enables the Chorus to plan for concerts in the post covid-19 environment based on the improved financial position of the Chorus. The Trustees review the level of subscriptions each year, with the aim of keeping pace with the underlying cost of regular rehearsals and to fund concert promotions.

My thanks go to all the people who help financially by giving generous amounts of their time with no other reward than enhancing their own singing experience and seeing the Chorus progress.

In addition, my particular thanks go to Hilary Mackenzie who has succeeded magnificently in meeting the challenge of the day-to-day accounting which makes this report possible.



Paul Harden
Finance Director
2 November 2021

Hertfordshire Chorus
Statement of financial activities for the year ending 31 August 2021

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	New commission Funds	Total Funds 2021	Total Funds 2020
		£	£	£	£
Income					
<i>Donations and legacies:</i>					
Membership subscriptions		0		0	26,826
Gift aid		0		0	4,545
Other donations, grants and sponsorship	2	25,537	9,228	34,765	10,661
<i>Charitable activities:</i>					
Concerts		597		597	22,969
<i>Other activities:</i>					
External engagements and recordings		0		0	22,498
Other fund raising activities		3,634		3,634	5,982
Total Income		29,769	9,228	38,997	93,480
(Expenditure)					
<i>Raising funds:</i>					
External engagements and recordings		0		0	(14,698)
Other fund raising activities		(1,689)		(1,689)	(2,734)
<i>Charitable activities:</i>					
Artistic costs		(1,330)	(1,000)	(2,330)	(25,727)
Non-artistic costs		(187)		(187)	(14,100)
<i>Other:</i>					
Rehearsal costs		(17,342)		(17,342)	(20,699)
Other general costs		(2,239)		(2,239)	(2,608)
Total Expenses		(22,786)	(1,000)	(23,786)	(80,565)
Net income / (expenditure)		6,982	8,228	15,210	12,915
Reconciliation between Funds					
Total funds brought forward		43,140	3,631	46,771	33,856
Total funds carried forward		50,122	11,859	61,981	46,771

Hertfordshire Chorus
Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2021

	Note	Total funds £	Prior year funds £
Current Assets			
Stock	3	0	0
Debtors and prepayments		2,266	1,866
Cash at bank	4	64,380	50,215
Total Current Assets		66,646	52,081
Liabilities			
Creditors falling due within one year		(4,665)	(5,310)
Net current assets less current liabilities		61,981	46,771
The funds of the charity			
Unrestricted income funds	5	50,122	43,140
New Commission funds	5	11,859	3,631
Total charity funds		61,981	46,771

Notes on the accounts

1) Accounting Policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (second edition – October 2019 effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). The Hertfordshire Chorus meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The accounts are presented on a fully accrued basis so that the true values of both income and expenditure are shown in the period that they relate to rather than the date that payments may have been received or made. All assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value.

No statement of cash flows is presented as the annual gross income of The Hertfordshire Chorus is less than £500,000.

b) Layout of the accounts

The layout of the income statement follows the disclosure requirements of Charities SORP (FRS102). Comparatives for 2020 have been disclosed.

c) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The accounts are prepared on the basis that the Chorus is a going concern. As a result of the covid-19 outbreak, the activities of the Chorus were significantly curtailed during 2020 and 2021. The Chorus carefully managed its financial situation throughout that period and consequently the Chorus's reserves have been preserved and enhanced. Following the relaxation of restrictions, the Chorus has planned a varied and challenging series of concerts for 2021/2022.

Looking forward, the uncertain economic outlook, the potential for the imposition of new restrictions due to covid-19 and willingness of the public to purchase tickets for our future concerts is a significant area of financial uncertainty. The Trustees are carefully managing the financial position of the Chorus, and the forthcoming concerts season is prudently designed and costed to take account of these uncertainties. There will be a continued emphasis on other fundraising activities.

d) Income

Income is recognised when the Chorus has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably. Income from government and other grants is recognised when the Chorus has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Donations and grants specific to particular concerts have been recorded as income from charitable activities related to those concerts.

e) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the Hertfordshire Chorus. Designated funds are restricted funds of the charity which the Trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. The New Commission Fund is to be used for the commissioning and promotion of new choral works and is funded by grants and donations for this purpose.

f) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise the costs of fundraising and undertaking external engagements
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of performances and other activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents costs of rehearsals together with those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

g) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

h) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

i) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Accrued income is recognised when cash has been received but the criteria for income to be recognised in the Income Statement has not been met.

j) Financial instruments

The Chorus only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

2) Grants

The Chorus was granted a sum of £6,000 from the Arts Council of which £5,400 was received in the current year. This grant has been received in connection with the commission by the Chorus of a new choral work by Shruthi Rajasekar about the life of Sarojini Naidu, an Indian poet and politician.

3) Stock

Stock and equipment are not capitalised but at the year-end the principal assets were the Music Library, a stock of CD's and display equipment.

4) Cash at bank

Comprises accounts at the following Banks and electronic cash providers:

Bank accounts	Year ended 31 August 2021 £	Year ended 31 August 2020 £
HSBC	57,499	46,588
Natwest	1,573	1,573
Lloyds	5,324	2,054
PayPal	0	0
Total	64,397	50,215

4) Reserves Policy

Reserves are maintained to assist the Chorus to operate effectively. The Council has set the required level of reserves, or resources, for the organisation at the sum of (a) the total costs of the most expensive concert in the forthcoming budget and (b) the next year's predicted shortfall if any.

Current reserve analysis for year 31 August 2021:

Budget presented to Council 7 September 2021


Most expensive concert 2021/22 £27,430

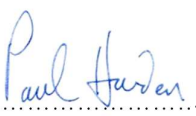
Shortfall 2021/22 £21,374

Required reserves £48,804

Unrestricted reserves as at 31 August 2021 £50,122

New Commission Fund as at 31 August 2021 £11,859

Signed 
Lesley Blankfield - Chair
Signed on behalf of the Trustees
2 November 2021

Signed 
Paul Harden – Finance Director
Signed on behalf of the Trustees
2 November 2021

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT YEAR ENDED 31ST AUGUST 2021

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st August 2021 which are set out on pages 6 to 9.

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 Report

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

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.



Colin Hall M.A.A.T.
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Stevenage
Herts
SG2 0NN
2 November 2021