



HERTFORDSHIRE
CHORUS

Annual report and accounts

YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST 2022

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1ST SEPTEMBER 2021 TO 31ST AUGUST 2022

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 (Retired, 24 th November 2021) Carole Teacher Evelyn Poulton Jessica Dormer (Resigned 6 th September 2022) Stuart Borner (Elected 24 th November 2021) Naomi Taylor (Elected 24 th November 2021, Resigned 6 th September 2022) Kathryn Hughes (Appointed 8 th March 2022) Helen Collier (Appointed 6 th September 2022)
Musical Director	David Temple, MBE

Lesley Blankfield, Paul Harden, Neil Brinkworth, Carole Teach and Evelyn Poulton were trustees during the whole financial year to which these accounts relate and also at the date this report was approved. Details of the other trustees' elections, appointments, retirements and resignations are set out above.

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

Hertfordshire Chorus responded well to the commencement of musical near-normality this season. Our aim has been to make an impact with our return to performance for the benefit of our singers and audiences. We performed four major concerts despite the continuing pandemic; however, we cancelled our Christmas Carol concert in 2021 due to a new wave of Covid.

The first concert of the season in October 2021 was a wonderful all Mozart programme at St Albans Cathedral including the *Mass in C Minor*, *Solemn Vespers* and *Ave Verum Corpus*. The concert was well attended by an appreciative audience. We were delighted to work with the London Orchestra da Camera and a wonderful group of soloists - Sopranos Grace Davidson and Julia Doyle, Tenor Sam Furness and Bass Dominic Sedgwick.

In February 2022 we returned to St Albans Cathedral to present two rarely performed pieces, Edward Elgar's atmospheric piece '*The Black Knight*' and Hubert Parry's deeply moving, *De Profundis*. We were delighted to work with the English Heritage Music Series who prepared a newly constructed score for us to use for this piece. Once again, we performed with the London Orchestra da Camera and this time with soprano soloist Sarah Fox.

In March 2022 we were engaged to sing at the Royal Festival Hall for a wonderful Games Music Festival concert which was well received by an enthusiastic audience. For this concert we worked with the Philharmonia Orchestra and conductor Robert Kurdybacha. Our singers were thrilled to be helping to celebrate music from a different genre to the ones we are familiar with.

In May 2022 we were delighted to be able to travel to sing at The Sage in Gateshead in collaboration with the Newcastle Choral Society. This programme, James McCarthy's '*Codebreaker*' and Vaughan Williams '*A Sea Symphony*' had been planned for 2020 so it was wonderful to be able to complete the project and sing in one of our favourite venues.

For our final concert of the season, we returned to the West Road Hall in Cambridge for an exciting programme of jazz music. We celebrated the 20th anniversary of one of our commissions, '*Songs from the Cage*' by Roland Perrin and paired this piece with the '*Sacred Concert*' by Duke Ellington.

We were engaged for other external events including the regular Willow Foundation Christmas concert and singers have boosted the numbers for other choirs including for the Proms with Crouch End Festival Chorus.

We are working with Signum records to complete a recording of carols newly arranged by Louis Halsey having begun the project in July 2022. This is planned to launch in time for Christmas 2023 and we hope it will sell well.

We returned to funding via subscriptions rather than member donations as we were able to offer members a full season of engagements. Our loyal network of Patrons and Friends have continued to support us financially this season and we are immensely grateful for their continuing generosity. The Chorus Lottery has been an excellent source of income over the years and is still going strong.

We have a team dedicated to fundraising which includes provision of wedding choirs, bake nights, grant funding and crowd funding. We also ran a very successful auction of promises to fund our latest commission, *Sarajini* by Shruthi Rajasekar, which was performed in St Albans Cathedral to great acclaim in October 2022, and a forthcoming prestigious recording project for Sir Karl Jenkins's '*The Armed Man*'. This recording will ensure that the Chorus is more widely known and should attract both new singers and audiences.

We continue to run a robust recruitment campaign and have attracted several new singers this season through use of online ads and a rehearsal workshop. We have lost some members due to relocation or retirement but are pleased to have welcomed some excellent new singers. We currently have a full complement of Sopranos, but we would welcome more Altos and particularly Tenors and Bases, whose numbers continue to be a problem as is the case with all choirs. We are pleased though to have retained healthy numbers of current members with very few retirements and currently have 115 active singers.

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.

As the cost-of-living crisis progresses however, we will continue to programme carefully to ensure that we use our assets wisely. Concert budgets are under constant review, and we are cautious about making binding arrangements for venues and other costs until absolutely necessary. The forthcoming season's programme is exciting and challenging but is also designed to attract the maximum return for sensible investment. Ticket sales remain important, and our programme should maximise income as we reduce performance costs.

Members of the Chorus gain mental health benefits from participating in quality music making and we know that they value the support and friendship the Chorus gives them through rehearsals and performances.

The Chorus has continued to thrive and plan ahead despite difficult economic and global conditions. Patrons, singers, supporters and Council all work hard to ensure that we are able to deliver on our objectives and provide a wonderful home for all those who love high quality choral singing.

This has been my fourth year as Chair and I am grateful to everyone who has supported Hertfordshire Chorus during my tenure. 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 deliver innovative musical programming which challenges and excites our singers. They benefit from his deep knowledge and experience and rehearsals and performances are always a joy. Our accompanist, Rufus Frowde is a great support and a wonderful musician. I thank them both for all they do for the Chorus.

This season promises to be exciting and rewarding for singers and audiences and we are all looking forward to it.



Lesley Blankfield
Chair, on behalf of the Trustees
1 November 2022

Financial review

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 return to normal musical life following the covid-19 outbreak has seen good audiences for both our concerts in St Albans Cathedral in October 2021 and February 2022, and also our concert in the Sage Gateshead in May 2022. Unfortunately, our concert in Cambridge in July 2022 was less well attended. In total our ticket income was more than budgeted, even taking into account the cancellation of our Christmas 2021 concert.

Our income from external engagements came from a well-received Games Music concert with the Philharmonia Orchestra in the Royal Festival Hall and a share of income from Crouch End Festival Chorus as Hertfordshire Chorus helped provide some singers for some of their external engagements.

The Chorus received during the year a final instalment of £600 from a total Arts Council grant of £6,000 to fund the new commission of *Sarajini* by a new up and coming young composer Shruthi Rajasekar. Additional specific fundraising was raised to help fund the successful performance of *Sarajini*, which occurred during October 2022.

Our recording of *Nova Nova* carols was partially funded by individuals sponsoring specific carols. An auction of promises was held raising funds for *Sarajini* and our forthcoming recording of the *Armed Man*.

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.

The Chorus has established a Conductor's Circle 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.

Overall, there has been a decrease of £8,287 (an increase of £15,210 prior year) in the Chorus's total reserves of which an increase of £46 (£8228) relates to the forthcoming *Armed Man* recording and 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 £53,694 (£61,981) of which £11,905 (£11,859) are restricted.

This healthy reserve position enables the Chorus to manage its costs and plan for concerts prudently given the cost-of-living crisis which is forecast to adversely impact all sources of income, including ticket sales, subscriptions and donations. The Trustees have taken great care to prepare a very prudent budget for the forthcoming season, to manage the potential financial strains. As there is a great level of uncertainty regarding the economic climate, there is flexibility in the budget to adapt the concert programming as required.

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. The cost-of-living crisis is likely to impact our members, so the membership fee has not been raised for the forthcoming year. Maintaining our membership numbers is important for our finances, as well as our ability to give the musical performances to which we aspire, consequently the budget has reflected lower potential subscriptions than lose valued members and friends.

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
1 November 2022

Hertfordshire Chorus
Statement of financial activities for the year ending 31 August 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2021 £
Income					
<i>Donations and legacies:</i>					
Membership subscriptions		28,628		28,628	0
Gift aid		5,167		5,167	0
Other donations, grants and sponsorship		9,254	6,486	15,740	34,765
<i>Charitable activities:</i>					
Concerts		31,020		31,020	597
<i>Trading activities:</i>					
External engagements and recordings		13,367		13,367	0
Other fund-raising activities		12,111		12,111	3,634
Total Income		99,547	6,486	106,033	38,997
(Expenditure)					
<i>Raising funds:</i>					
External engagements and recordings		(8,905)		(8,905)	0
Other fund-raising activities		(8,404)	(440)	(8,844)	(1,689)
<i>Charitable activities:</i>					
Artistic costs		(40,621)	(6,000)	(46,621)	(2,330)
Non-artistic costs		(21,438)		(21,438)	(187)
<i>Other:</i>					
Rehearsal costs		(24,129)		(24,129)	(17,342)
Other general costs		(4,383)		(4,383)	(2,239)
Total Expenses		(107,880)	(6,440)	(114,320)	(23,786)
Net income / (expenditure)		(8,333)	46	(8,287)	15,210
Reconciliation between Funds					
Total funds brought forward		50,122	11,859	61,981	46,771
Total funds carried forward		41,789	11,905	53,694	61,981

Hertfordshire Chorus
Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2022

	Note	Total funds £	Prior year funds £
Current Assets			
Stock	2	0	0
Debtors		10,022	2,266
Cash at bank	3	46,234	64,380
Total Current Assets		56,256	66,646
Liabilities			
Creditors falling due within one year		(2,562)	(4,665)
Net current assets less current liabilities		53,694	61,981
The funds of the charity			
Unrestricted income funds	4	41,789	50,122
Restricted income funds		11,905	11,859
Total charity funds		53,694	61,981

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 2021 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 at the start of this financial year were in a good economic state, enabling the Chorus to make a small finance loss in the current financial period.

Looking forward, the uncertain economic outlook, the cost-of-living crisis and the potential for the imposition of new restrictions due to new covid-19 outbreaks 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. The level of

membership subscriptions and the payment flexibility has been designed to maintain membership levels, and hence future income for the Chorus. A prudent budget has been prepared for the 2022/23 financial year. 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 in 2020/21 a sum of £6,000 from the Arts Council of which £600 was received in the current year (£5,400 for 2020/21). 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. The remaining £6,000 fee for the commission was paid to the composer during 2021/22.

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 2022 £	Year ended 31 August 2021 £
HSBC	19,896	57,482
Natwest	22,765	1,573
Lloyds	3,573	5,324
PayPal	0	0
Total	46,234	64,380

4) Reserves Policy

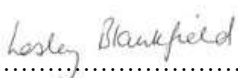
Reserves are maintained to assist the Chorus to operate effectively. The Council has set the required level of reserves, or resources, for the organisation at the sum of (a) the total costs of the most expensive concert in the forthcoming budget and (b) the next year's predicted shortfall if any.

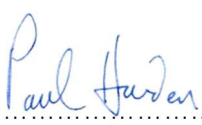
Current reserve analysis for year 31 August 2022:

Budget presented to Council 6 September 2022

Most expensive concert 2022/23	£22,839
Shortfall 2022/23	£31,512
Required reserves	£54,351

Unrestricted reserves as at 31 August 2022	£41,789
Restricted reserves as at 31 August 2022	£11,905
Total reserves as at 31 August 2022	£53,694

Signed 
Lesley Blankfield - Chair
Signed on behalf of the Trustees
1 November 2022

Signed 
Paul Harden – Finance Director
Signed on behalf of the Trustees
1 November 2022

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT YEAR ENDED 31ST AUGUST 2022

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st August 2022 which are set out on pages 6 to 10.

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.



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1 November 2022