



HERTFORDSHIRE
CHORUS

Annual report and accounts

YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST 2023

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1ST SEPTEMBER 2022 TO 31ST AUGUST 2023

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

Charity Name	Hertfordshire Chorus
Registered Charity Number	281627
Charity's Principal Address	16 Waverley Road, St Albans, AL3 5PA
Trustees of the Charity	Lesley Blankfield (Chair) (Ceased to be Chair 23 rd November 2022) Clare McConnell (Chair) (Elected Trustee and Chair 23 rd November 2022) Paul Harden (Finance Director) (Retired 23 rd November 2022, Elected Trustee and Temporary Finance Director 17 th July 2023) Ceased to be Temporary Finance Director 7 th September 2023) Tony Thomson (Finance Director) (Elected 23 rd November 2022, Resigned 16 th June 2023) Julian Edwards (Finance Director) (Appointed 7 th September 2023) Neil Brinkworth Carole Teacher Evelyn Poulton (Retired 23 rd November 2022) Jessica Dormer (Resigned 6 th September 2022) Naomi Taylor (Resigned 6 th September 2022) Kate Hughes Helen Collier (Resigned 31 st August 2023) John Keogh (Appointed 7 th September 2023)
Musical Director	David Temple, MBE

Lesley Blankfield, Neil Brinkworth, Carole Teacher and Kate Hughes 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 a number of key 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. Supporting the Trustees are other voluntary and un-elected positions filled by other Chorus Members. Approximately 50% of the Chorus Members are directly involved in helping with the running of the Chorus 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 had a successful 2022-2023 concert season: performing a wide range of works at concerts in Hertfordshire and London; making two recordings with Signum Records; and being commissioned to record and perform *Highland Home* by Kurt Rosenberg.

In October 2022 at St Albans Cathedral, Hertfordshire Chorus was delighted to perform the world premiere of a new work, *Sarajini*, by Indian-American composer Shruthi Rajasekar. The work for chorus, orchestra and Indian classical instruments was commissioned by Hertfordshire Chorus and is named after Sarajini Naidu, poet, women's rights activist and an important person in India's struggle for independence. The work included performances from two renowned Indian classical musicians Nirmala Rajasekar (veena) and Tanjore Murugaboopathi (mridangam) and it received significant critical acclaim. The Chorus, and our Musical Director David Temple MBE had been working with Shruthi Rajasekar for a considerable period of time prior to our concert and, on the day, it was wonderful to see our support of this young composer through our commission culminate in such a successful and enjoyable performance.

Alongside *Sarajini* we performed Sir Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* with London Orchestra da Camera, Ana Beard Fernandez (soprano) and Osama Kiwan (muezzin). Our performance of this popular work was also well received by a highly appreciative audience.

In February 2023 we returned to St Albans Cathedral to perform Faure's *Requiem*, James MacMillan's *O Radiant Dawn*, Monteverdi's *Dixit Dominus and Beatus Vir* and Peteris Vasks' *Plainscapes*. The concert was well attended by a very engaged audience, the largest audience of our season. We were delighted to work with Dominic Sedgwick (baritone), Rufus Frowde (organ), Ruth Rogers (violin), Sarah Butcher (cello), and Kate Hughes, a member of our Chorus, who sang the soprano solo part in Faure's *Requiem*.

Our third concert of the year, Will Todd's *Mass in Blue*, was in May 2023 at Cadogan Hall. It was a very special concert for the Chorus and David Temple because 20 years earlier we had commissioned and given the premiere. The work is a fusion of sacred choral music and jazz and this made for a very lively and energetic performance that was enthusiastically received by our audience. We were very grateful that Will Todd (piano), and the Will Todd Ensemble, together with Hilary Cronin (soprano) were able to work with us to deliver such a successful event. Also in the programme was Bruckner's *Mass in E minor*.

Our summer concert in July 2023 at St Mary the Virgin & All Saints Church, Potters Bar, was an exciting and varied programme of works from Tallis *If Ye Love Me*, Vaughan Williams's *Mass in G minor*, J S Bach's *Lobet den Herrn*, James MacMillan's *Cantos Sagrados*, Purcell's *Hear my Prayer*, Barber's *Angus Dei* and Libby Croad's *To the Immaculate Heart of Mary*. Prior to our performance the Chorus and David Temple had the opportunity to rehearse with Libby Croad and so gain a deeper insight into her piece that enhanced our performance.

We continued to work with Signum Records, a leading independent classical music label with which we have collaborated previously on *Codebreaker* and *Ode to a Nightingale*. The Chorus recorded two albums this season. First, in October 2022 we recorded the ensemble version of *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*. We were exceptionally pleased that Sir Karl Jenkins was able to attend our recording and to receive positive feedback and support from him about our performance. We were delighted to work with London Orchestra da Camera, Kathryn Rudge, mezzo-soprano and Osama Kiwan, muezzin. The ensemble version of *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* has never been recorded before and so we were delighted to make this recording as it will ensure that this very popular version of the work and the Chorus now has a recording which will benefit other choirs who perform this reduced score version. Our Musical Director has spent a significant amount of time working on the final production of the recording and we expect to release it early 2024.

Our second recording in July 2022 and February 2023 was *Nova! Nova! - Joy to the World!* a recording of 23 favourite Christmas carols arranged for choir by Louis Halsey, including English, German, French, Czech, Basque, Welsh and Irish melodies. Involving the Chorus, Rufus Frowde (organ), and David Temple, the complete recording was released on 13 October 2023 with *Joy to the World* being the first single to be released from it.

In June 2023 we were engaged by Kurt Rosenberg to record his composition *'Highland Home'*, arranged by Ken Johnston for choir and soloist. We were pleased to work again with Zoë Brookshaw (soprano) to record this commission in July 2023 and we were delighted to have the opportunity thereafter to perform it at our October 2023 concert at St Albans Cathedral, alongside Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem*.

We were engaged for other external events including the Willow Foundation Christmas concert and have provided Chorus members to boost the numbers for other choirs including for the Proms with Crouch End Festival Chorus.

Our main sources of income continue to be subscriptions and ticket sales. This year we increased our subscription level in response to our increasing fixed cost base and to account for the reduction in member numbers. It has been a challenging environment particularly in relation to ticket sales. Like many other choirs we continue to experience the legacy of Covid

and we too have found it increasingly more difficult to attract large audiences to our events. We have an active Ticket Sales Team who do a great job promoting and selling tickets for our events. However, we recognised that additional steps needed to be taken to maintain and increase tickets sales and so we appointed a group of volunteer members specifically tasked with increasing our marketing activities, including on social media. This approach has been effective and our audience numbers have remained steady. We know that we cannot be complacent and we are therefore seeking to recruit a Marketing Director who can develop and drive forward marketing activities to promote our events and increase attendance and ticket sales.

Other sources of income include the support from our Patrons and Friends, and we are deeply grateful for this and their on-going engagement with us. We also carry out fundraising activities including the provision of wedding choirs and bake nights. We recognise that we would benefit from having a Fundraising Director who could identify and secure grant funding for the Chorus and we anticipate being able to take steps to address this during the forthcoming season.

This year, as previously, we continue to plan our events with care, balancing the need for financial prudence and stability with the need to ensure we present concerts to the highest possible standards that are enjoyable for our members and attractive to audiences.

We have been very successful with our recruitment campaigns this season. We have a very active Recruitment Team that has been effective in attracting several new singers, notably a number of tenors and basses. This coming season we will build on this success by providing a series of workshops for potential new members to attend.

As Chair of Hertfordshire Chorus I am grateful for the support provided by all Council members to ensure the affairs of the Chorus are well managed and that our members' views are represented. I am also very grateful for the support given to me by Council and our members during my year as Chair. Our Musical Director, David Temple MBE has been a continuing source of inspiration for the Chorus, guiding and delivering a diverse and exciting repertoire for the Chorus to sing. Rufus Frowde, our accompanist, also continues to be an integral member of our team and a great musician, and a great support for all. I thank them both for all they do for the Chorus.

Dr Clare McConnell FRSA
Chair, on behalf of the Trustees
31st October 2023

Financial review

Hertfordshire 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 recognising the financial costs of these orchestral concerts. The fundraising activities of the members of the Chorus, including obtaining grants and sponsorship, to support the promotion of these concerts.

In addition, the continued support of our Patrons and Friends and the efforts of our individual members have resulted in steady levels of income across most of our other fund-raising activities; the continued success of the Grants Team has also 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. The New Commission Fund is a restricted fund to pay for new commissions, their performance and other related activities.

The Arts Council grant of £6,000, received in prior years, funded 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 'world premiere' of *Sarajini*, which occurred in October 2022.

The 'Auction of Promises' that was held in the prior year raised funds for *Sarajini* and for our recording of Sir Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*. Our recording of *'Nova! Nova! – Joy to the World!'* Christmas Carols, with Signum Records, which took place over two days (July 2022 and February 2023) was partially funded by individuals sponsoring specific carols. The *'Armed Man : A Mass for Peace'* recording took place in November 2022 and is scheduled for release in February 2024.

We also undertook a recording project in June 2023, for the American composer Kurt Rosenberg, of his short unaccompanied choral piece, arranged by Ken Johnston, *'Highland Home'*; this was fully-funded by the composer himself.

Overall, there has been a decrease of £18,871 in the Chorus's total reserves. The reduction is primarily due to the costs associated with the *'Nova Nova'* and *The Armed Man* recording and the *Sarajini* premiere.

Total reserves now stand at £34,823 (£53,694) of which £ 50 (£11,905) is within the restricted fund.

The current reserve position enables the Chorus to manage its costs and plan for concerts prudently given the cost-of-living crisis that adversely impacts all sources of income, including ticket sales, subscriptions and donations. There has also been an increase in all of the costs associated with our performances including venue hire, orchestral costs, and costs of soloists.

The Trustees have taken care to prepare a very prudent budget for the forthcoming season (2023/4), in order to manage the potential financial strains. As there continues to be a great level of uncertainty regarding the economic climate, there is some flexibility in the budget to adapt the concert programming as required.

The Trustees also reviewed the level of subscriptions, with the aim of keeping pace with the underlying cost of regular rehearsals and funding concert promotions. At an E.G.M. held in Summer 2023, agreement was given to a significant increase in subscription fees. Maintaining our membership numbers is important for our finances, as well as our ability to give the musical performances to which we aspire.

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 that makes this report possible.

Julian Edwards
Finance Director
31 October 2023

Hertfordshire Chorus
Statement of financial activities for the year ending 31 August 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
Income					
<i>Donations and legacies:</i>					
Membership subscriptions		26,081		26,081	28,628
Gift aid on Subscriptions		5,226		5,226	5,167
Other donations, grants and sponsorship		6,678	50	6,728	15,740
<i>Charitable activities:</i>					
Concerts		32,556		32,556	31,020
<i>Trading activities:</i>					
External engagements and recordings		17,486		17,486	13,367
Other fund raising activities		10,762		10,762	12,111
Total Income		98,788	50	98,838	106,033
(Expenditure)					
<i>Raising funds:</i>					
External engagements and recordings		(24,737)	(3,905)	(28,642)	(8,905)
Other fund raising activities		(7,117)		(7,117)	(8,844)
<i>Charitable activities:</i>					
Artistic costs		(23,529)	(8,000)	(31,529)	(46,621)
Non-artistic costs		(22,469)		(22,469)	(21,438)
<i>Other:</i>					
Rehearsal costs		(23,979)		(23,979)	(24,129)
Other general costs		(3,973)		(3,973)	(4,383)
Total Expenses		(105,805)	(11,905)	(117,710)	(114,320)
Net income / (expenditure)		(7,016)	(11,855)	(18,871)	(8,287)
Reconciliation between Funds					
Total funds brought forward		41,789	11,905	53,694	61,981
Total funds carried forward		34,773	50	34,823	53,694

Hertfordshire Chorus
Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2023

	Note	Total funds £	Prior year funds £
Current Assets			
Stock	2	0	0
Debtors		6,650	10,022
Cash at bank	3	31,791	46,234
Total Current Assets		38,441	56,256
Liabilities			
Creditors falling due within one year		(3,618)	(2,562)
Net current assets less current liabilities		34,823	53,694
The funds of the charity			
Unrestricted income funds	4	34,773	41,789
Restricted income funds		50	11,905
Total charity funds		34,823	53,694

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 2022 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 plan a suitable programme of concerts and recordings.

Looking forward, the uncertain economic outlook, the cost-of-living crisis and the 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 2023/24 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 prior 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.

The Chorus received a grant of £3,000 from the Williams Church Music Trust for the concert in St Albans Cathedral on 25 February 2023.

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:

	Year Ended 31 August 2023 £	Year Ended 31 August 2022 £
Bank Accounts		
HSBC	13,981	19,896
Natwest	16,177	22,765
Lloyds	1,633	3,573
Total	31,791	46,234

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 2023:

Budget presented to Council 7 September 2023	
Most expensive concert 2023/24	£20,415
Shortfall 2023/24	£ 7,515
Required reserves	£27,930

Unrestricted reserves as at 31 August 2023	£34,773
Restricted reserves as at 31 August 2023	£ 50
Total reserves as at 31 August 2023	£34,823

Signed
Dr Clare McConnell FRSA - Chair
Signed on behalf of the Trustees
31 October 2023

Signed
Julian Edwards – Finance Director
Signed on behalf of the Trustees
31 October 2023

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT YEAR ENDED 31ST AUGUST 2023

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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31 October 2023