



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From 1 Sep 2023 **To** 31 Aug 2024

Charity name: Friends of Southampton Youth Orchestras

Charity registration number: 283789

Objectives and Activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	The aim of the Society is to advance the musical education of students at schools and colleges in the Southampton region, by the provision of facilities and funds for the Southampton Youth Orchestras which are not normally provided by Southampton City Council.
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	The Society raises funds through concerts and other means to enhance the activities of Southampton Youth Orchestras for example the production of concerts, support to tuition, music and instrument costs and support to orchestra tours.
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	The report describes the activities undertaken by the Society during the year, and confirms that trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.

Achievements and Performance 2023-24

Activities

The academic year 2023-2024 has been a strong year for all the ensembles of the Southampton Youth Orchestras pyramid. As FSYO it has been our pleasure to support the young people in their musical endeavors and a privilege to hear them perform at the various concerts over the year.

The highlight of the year for the Friends was the pyramid concert on 3rd February at Central Hall. All ensembles gave a strong performance. As the Friends it was our pleasure to support the combined string players from all groups to perform Fiddlers Hill. This was an astounding accomplishment. We managed to make a profit for the concert, showing that there is strong support for our young musicians from friends and family. It was good to have the mayor in attendance, and she was impressed with the standard of musicianship.

This year the Friends have supported the ensembles with equipment purchases. At the beginning of the academic year we purchased 50 music stands for use at Cantell school and 50 stand lights for use during concerts. We joined together with the other Friends groups to purchase 50 good quality music stands to be kept at Richard Taunton. We have paid for instruments to be serviced so that they can continue to be enjoyed by many players in the years to come.

In addition to music equipment and purchases, the Friends have continued to help provide music experiences for the young people in the ensembles. In January we contributed to the SYS trip to Fairthorne Manor. In the summer term we funded a trip for SYS/SYCS to go to Bournemouth and see the Fultones play. We also funded a trip for SYO to travel to Devizes to play at a music festival. In addition, the Friends supported the young musicians who receive Pupil premium to attend the Fairthorne Manor trip and the SYO/SYCS trip to France by paying 1/3 of the cost for these students.

Public Benefit

Our work supports music education, enabling children to express themselves and enjoy themselves. Orchestral participation is an excellent framework within which children improve their social skills. The concerts, especially the pyramid concert in which all orchestras participate, inspire the younger children to achieve higher levels of performance.

Musical Director's Reports

Elgar Strings

Chris Nichols

With the closure of Acorn Strings, all the children left without an ensemble were welcomed into Elgar Strings, giving us a solid 35 members to start the year. This was also my first chance to explore music for an ensemble playing above Grade 1. Using some of the remaining Acorn budget, I purchased plenty of new music for the year ahead. Elgar Strings gave their first performance on Monday, 13th November, during our regular rehearsal time. We played a mix of late-Acorn pieces and Elgar classics, all selected to develop the students' beginner ensemble skills. Among the highlights were "Jack in the Box" and a simple arrangement of "Pachelbel's Canon".

On 3rd February, Elgar Strings opened the annual Orchestra's Pyramid Concert with a beautiful arrangement of "Greensleeves.". We also introduced two new pieces: "Speed Force," which challenged the group to maintain control through fast quaver passages, and "I Spy," a cinematic piece using different string techniques to tell a story. Later, we joined the other ensembles for a performance of Jeff Moore's folk-inspired "Fiddler's Hill" This was an amazing experience for the players, and many of them continued humming the themes from the piece for weeks afterward!

In mid-March, we performed a joint concert with Boom! and Airplay. Elgar played five pieces, including a freely arranged version of the traditional American tune "Rocky Mountain," the Canadian tune "Land of the Silver Birch," and "Robot Factory," which used special effects to create a mechanical soundscape. We then came together with the other groups for a massed performance of Sarah Watt's "Movie Buster"

We closed the year with a joint concert alongside SYS on 24th June. This was a fantastic opportunity to showcase everything we had worked on throughout the year, both technically and musically. Our program included three newly arranged pieces: a suite from the third Pirates of the Caribbean film, Michael Jackson's "Thriller," and Bill Withers' "Lean on Me." We also played Brian Balmages' "Mind Games" an eerie piece that introduced sliding low first fingers into the main harmony. It was a lot of fun, and it quickly became a favorite in the orchestra!

I would like to say a huge thank you to Zoe Hunting for giving me the opportunity to direct Elgar Strings, and for all of her support in running the ensemble. Your assistance, as always, makes this a real pleasure. A big thank you also to the Friends for their incredible support of all the ensembles. From helping us purchase music and equipment to providing financial support for students now enjoying Elgar Strings, you've made it possible for many who otherwise would not have access to 1-2-1 or small group lessons.

Southampton Youth Strings

Christa Porter

23/24 was a vintage year for SYS. As I reported at the last AGM, SYS started the year with 40 members and put on a very creditable informal first concert before the October half-term. The orchestra played 6 pieces that they had learned in 6 weeks alongside 10 solo performances by members of the orchestra. We were fortunate in having quite a strong viola section this year with two 1st study viola players; 4 violinist volunteers who took turns supporting the viola section; Charlie from SYCS who was sent to join us by his teacher who wanted him to have some viola experience; and Will Tuffrey who was volunteering with us as part of his Gold D of E award. We also had 4 regular cellists and 3 basses so it was a nicely balanced orchestra.

Once the concert was over and the orchestra had settled down, we were able to get our quartets up and running again under Will's supervision. We were able to give 16 members the chance to play in 4 quartets and each quartet prepared a couple of pieces ready to play in our Easter concert. In the mean-time we had the Fairthorne trip and the Pyramid concert to prepare for. I was keen for us to do a complete performance of the Toy Symphony at our summer concert but wanted to try out the last movement at Fairthorne to see if it was feasible. This movement is played through three times, each time faster than the time before. Fairthorne was an ideal opportunity to work on playing fast so I combined the Mozart with a selection of short fast pieces and we had a lot of fun learning how to manage the speeds required. Our trip to Fairthorne, supported by the Friends, was attended by 16 children and was staffed by Chris and Katie Nichols and myself. As usual, that meant Chris and I could run two separate chamber groups where pupils had to work without a conductor, and we were also able to work on a folk tune under Chris' guidance.

The Pyramid concert was the week after Fairthorne and we played a selection of three English Folk Songs and a couple of numbers from Fiddler on the Roof as well as joining in the massed performance of all the Pyramid strings in Fiddler's Hill which was quite a feat.

This year we teamed up with Twango and Los Twangolitos, the 2 guitar groups, for our Easter Concert. SYS played the complete medley from the Fiddler on the Roof arrangement as well as an arrangement of Haydn's Surprise movement from his symphony and the Hallelujah tune from Shrek. Our quartets played splendidly and we said thank you and good bye to Will who had finished his year with us.

The year ended with our joint Summer concert with Elgar Strings. I wanted our harp player to experience some chamber music so Adrian ran a trio of violin, harp and bass through the summer term and they were able to perform a couple of pieces at the concert by O'Carolan. We did indeed manage a complete performance of Leopold Mozart's Toy Symphony with 6 guest soloists: Chris and Katie, Will, Nancy and her son Simon and Aarya playing the toys; and played Libertango and MyGrandfather's Clock. We said farewell to 15 members of the orchestra who were

ready to move upto SYCS and the two orchestras finished the year with a spirited joint performance of Hoe Down by Georgia Vale.

2024/2025 has started with a smaller orchestra of 27 players with only one 1st study viola but we are progressing nicely with a successful first concert already under our belts and are now preparing for the Pyramid concert and our annual trip to Fairthorne. I would like to thank the Friends for their support through the last year. We are very grateful for their attendance at our concerts, for their help with additional Fairthorne expenditure and for covering the cost of any new music that we buy. Almost everything that we play has been funded by the Friends over the last few years and we are very grateful.

SYCS

Anna Robinson

In September 2023, we once again had a strong intake into SYCS with record numbers pushing towards 90 on the register. In the Autumn term, we began preparing for our Christmas concert: A not so silent Night! Taking place at Thornden Hall and being supported by Mayflower Youth Theatre. The concert got both the orchestra and audience into the true Christmas Spirit with the programme including favorites such as The Polar Express, Home Alone and Shakin Stevens classic Merry Christmas Everyone! With a funky light show to compliment the music, the evening was enjoyed by all!

The spring term is always the busiest term for SYCS. Our first performance was at the pyramid concert, an evening that provided a musical highlight for the younger string orchestras. SYCS performed an accessible programme of The Great Locomotive Chase, Juba Dance, Doctor Who and Celebration complete with party hats! The performance was enjoyed by all! SYCS launched an extremely special and important project in Spring 2024, Make Some Noise. The aim of this project was to promote inclusivity in music and a celebration of people and community. The concert included a range of community groups and also students from Cedar School. Participants were interviewed by myself ahead of the event asking what music meant to them and these were showed between items, handing over the music to the people. The programme was fully inclusive keeping items short and accessible. The concert was a huge success closing with 2 massed songs of This is Me, featuring Makaton signing and Heather Small's Proud. In the Summer term, we embarked on a joint tour project with SYO- Franglais, ahead of our tour to Normandy in July. We performed a fully joint programme of French and English music at Central hall which included Crown Imperial and Phantom of the Opera. The concert was extremely well attended and received and a good prerequisite to our tour. This year the orchestra went to Orangerie Bourg- Saint Leonard, Normandy. We were delighted to take 71 students on the trip. We had some extremely productive rehearsals, a trip to a cheese factory, a fantastic performance of Carmen and a scavenger hunt. We performed a total of 4 fantastic concerts – at William the conqueror's castle, a music festival, Lisieux and a chateau at night as it was getting dark. Unfortunately we lost 2 concerts due to coach breakdowns but both the tour team and students stayed in good spirits.

This year, SYCS has 80 members on its register and are preparing for our Christmas Concert: Christmas at the Movies on Wednesday 6 th December at Thornden Hall. Not to be missed! For summer, we will be treating our audiences to A Night at the Musicals and have exciting plans in the pipeline for summer 2025. I am excited to announce with have further plans for Make Some Noise which will eventually feature the open orchestra being led by myself at the Cedar school but also we would like to continue the Make Some Noise message in everything we do, keeping the focus on inclusivity and community. I would like to thank the friends committee for their ongoing support and encouragement.

SYO

Kevin Withell

Southampton Youth Orchestra has had another successful year, with the biggest membership and audience we've seen for many years. I am surrounded by an excellent staff team – Charlie brings such a wealth of experience, organization and enthusiasm to the orchestra and has really flourished in her role as assistant conductor over the last couple of years. Christa has remained as our unofficial head of strings and repertoire advisor, and plays a vital role in choosing programmes that continue to challenge, excite and develop the orchestra.

Last year was a busy one. Our inaugural 'Children's Concert' in November was a sell-out, and a fantastic programme to start off our new year with. It was also only the second time SYO has played music by a female composer, and this started some conversations about how we could begin to explore some more repertoire NOT written by dead, white, straight men.

In January, we returned to Turner Sims for a performance of Scheherazade. Our guest leader, Steve, did a phenomenal job both of playing the solos and of inspiring the string section around him. A special mention to our wind and brass principals for learning some very hard solos. Our concert season finished in April in Romsey Abbey. Two members of the orchestra played movements of concertos, and an alumni soloist joined us for an absolutely staggering performance of Saint-Saens' Organ Symphony. Charlie worked extensively with our brass and woodwind, taking on two feature pieces. For the second time in a year, we had a sell-out audience.

In the summer term, we joined forces with SYCS and went on our first tour since 2018. Despite some drama with our coach and some stressful changes of plan, the tour was a roaring success. The students bonded fantastically, worked hard and performed extraordinarily. Our concert in Basilica Saint Therese was one of the most incredible concerts I've ever been a part of - I think the final chord of Mars might still be bouncing around the ceiling...

This year, we have seen a small drop in membership after a record number of leavers, but rehearsals for our first concert are very promising indeed. We have built up a large base of volunteers who are happy to come and play for concerts, which enables us to keep on pushing our standard and ambition. The highlights of this year include one of our students performing Symphonie Espagnole on violin in December, Sibelius 5th Symphony and Tchaikovsky 1st Piano Concerto in Thornden Hall in April, and the a return to Southampton Guildhall in July for a performance of Carmina Burana to mark SYO's 60th Birthday.

My thanks to everybody involved in making SYO what it is - to the staff that help us out, the staff from SMS and, by no means least, members of FSYO without whom my job would be impossible.

Southampton and Isle of Wight Music Report 2024

Zoe Hunting

It's been a year of change. Southampton Music Services has changed its name to Southampton and Isle of Wight Music to reflect the work they do in both areas. In addition, the new hubs are now set up. Southampton and Isle of Wight Music are the lead partner for the new South Coast Music Partnership consisting of the old Southampton Music Hub, Isle of Wight Music Hub, Portsmouth Music Hub and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. As the new hub develops, we plan for joint working which will be beneficial to all.

Instrumentally SLOW Music taught 1541 students either individually or in small groups. This is an increase of around a hundred from the previous year. In order for the service to survive financially in the future significant changes to its pricing structure. For the academic year 23-24 lesson fees were £115 for a 20 minute lesson regardless whether this was an individual or a group lesson. From September 2024 this changed to a clearer pricing system of £60 a term for a 20 minute lesson for a group of 4, £110 for a 20 minute paired lesson and £165 for a 20 minute individual lesson. For many this has meant a reduction in lesson costs whilst ensuring those who have an individual lesson are not being subsidised by those who have a group lesson. This reduction in fees for group lessons will enable more families to buy lessons. To date the new fee structure has pretty much done its job with a predicted £200 deficit by the end of the year. Whole class teaching has continued in 12 schools. The main instruments being taught are now ukulele, trumpet, violin and clarinet.

As mentioned last year the ensembles need to become self funding. Last year we revised the offer which brought in a £17,000 saving. We couldn't do any more to our offer without losing our progression routes so this year we also have looked at the pricing structure for ensemble membership. We have moved to a two tier system. The membership fee for ensembles that rehearse for less than 2 hours is now £60 a term and groups rehearsing for 2 or more hours a week the fee is £70 a term. Previously the membership for all groups was £40 a term. Membership to a second or third or more ensemble is £20 a term. The change to the pricing structure has clearly had an impact. At the end of 2023-2024 we had 246 individuals in our ensembles. However because so many of them played in multiple groups our overall membership number was 426. Some young musicians were playing in up to 5 groups. So far to 2024-2025 we have 277 individuals in our groups but with far fewer students playing in multiple groups giving an overall total of 338. We will need to do some further work into the reasons why fewer students are playing in multiple groups. Is it purely down to the cost? Was it the cohort of young people going through the system who have now left?

Overall our ensemble gave 35 concerts across the academic year although many of these included performance from more than 1 group. What was particularly exciting was to see a greater variety of performances. For example the Youth Brass Band

performed outdoors in a couple of local bandstands, the jazz group Studio Band performing at The Concorde Club in Chandlers Ford, Southampton Youth Concert Sinfonia launching their Make Some Noise project working with other local music groups.

In addition to the SLOW Music ensembles we also ran 6 groups within schools as well as continue to support Folk Actives Youth Ensemble. With the changes to the hub the decision was made not to audition any new students for a music award. We have continued with the awards for those who already had them but this has resulted in a drop from 25 holders down to 15. We are currently discussing how an award scheme may look in the future.

As always we would like to say a massive thank you to Friends of Southampton Youth Orchestras. Without your support we certainly would not have the means to provide such amazing musical opportunities for the young people of Southampton. Thank you so much.

Treasurer's Report 2023-2

Concert receipts for the year were £22227 with costs of £15565.

SYO has done well this year making a profit of £2667, SYCS £1987 and the Pyramid concert £1425

- Donations total £1557 including a donation from the family of Martin Bowyer from his funeral and on-line donations of £997.
- Gift-aid was £263 from concert collections.
- Memberships are collected on-line and direct.
- Payments of £6083 for support in schools / music days and talent development
- Costs of £2176 were paid for music hire with SYO and SYCS using their funds to hire a wider repertoire for the students to play.
- Insurance costs were £215
- Admin fees of £4248 include Fasthosts / Music stand lights / additional music stands for Cantell/ purchasing of clothing etc for SYCS / coach travel for trip to Devizes

Overall this means that across all areas a loss of £2128 was made. Inroads have been made to use our funds to advance the ensembles.

Our working fund at the end of the year held £23K with a savings reserve of £10K.

As we took in more than £25,000 last year we need to provide the Charity Commission with an independent examiner's report on the account, which has been provided. Our examiner found no concerns with the accounts.

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter)	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g. unincorporated association, CIO)	Para 1.25	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	Trustees are elected each year at the Annual General Meeting. Ex Officio appointments are automatically made to the committee for the leaders of the ensembles supported by the charity.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Friends of Southampton Youth Orchestra
Other name the charity uses	-
Registered charity number	283789
Charity's principal address	63 Highfield Lane Southampton SO17 1RL

Declarations

The trustee declares that they have approved the trustee's report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustee



Claire McKenzie

Treasurer



Richard Pugh

Position (eg Secretary, Chair, Chair etc)

Date
20 June 2025

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity (2023-24)

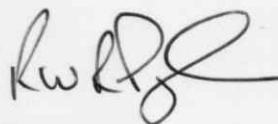
	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Nancy Lewis	Chair		
2	Clare McKenzie	Treasurer		
3	Jools Gowans			
4	Pete Gosney			
5	Max Davies			
6	Amanda Mitchell			
7	Richard Pugh			
8	Chris Nichols	Ex-Officio		
9	Christa Porter	Ex-Officio		
10	Anna Robinson	Ex-Officio		
11	Kevin Withell	Ex-Officio		
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)



Full name(s) Richard Pugh



Clare McKenzie

Position (eg Secretary, Chair
Chair, etc)

Treasurer

Date 20 June 2025

Friends of Southampton Youth Orchestras

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023	Notes
	£	£	£	£	
Receipts:					
Concerts	22227		22227	13356	
Donations and sponsorship	1557		1557	1457	
Gift Aid	263		263	373	
Membership	195		195	185	
Fundraising	36		36	488	
Music Hire	0		0	136	
Tour	0		0	0	
Interest	171		171	69	
Administration	666		666	96	
Talent Development	20		20		
			0		
Total Receipts	25135	0	25135	16160	
Payments					
Cost of Concerts	14344		14344	8134	
Visits, tours and training week-ends	27		27	346	
Talent Development	5349	734	6083	2696	
New Music	50		50	188	
Music Hire	2176		2176	572	
Music instruments & equipment	119		119	545	
Administration	4248		4248	746	
Costs of Fundraising	0		0	416	
Subscriptions & Insurance	215		215	226	
Gift Aid	0		0	0	
Total Payments	26528	734	27262	13869	
Net Receipts	-1393	-734	-2127	2291	
Transfers between funds	0	0	0	0	
Cash funds at 1 September 2023	35091	1654	36745	34454	
Cash funds at 31 August 2024	33698	920	34618	36745	

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31 AUGUST 2023

Outstanding Debts and Credits:

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds
	£	£

Fund to which
asset belongs

Assets retained for the charity's own use	Violin (insurance value £1500)	unrestricted
	Base Clarinet Insurance value £8500)	unrestricted

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

N.Lewis

C.McKenzie



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Friends of Southampton Youth Orchestras

on the accounts for the
year ended

31 August 2024

Charity no
(if any)

283789

Set out on pages

2 & 3

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/08/2024**.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

13 November 2024

Name:

M R Cooper

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

FCA

Address:

29 Welbeck Avenue

Southampton

SO17 1ST