

ST ALBANS CHORAL SOCIETY

Registered Charity No 287882

Report and Accounts for the year ended 15 July 2022

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OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

The objects of the Society are:

- to promote the study of and public education in the art and science of choral music by the presentation of public concerts and recitals and by such other ways as the Society shall from time to time determine; and
- to support such charitable purpose or purposes, or such charitable institution or institutions as the Society shall from time to time determine.

REPORT FOR THE SEASON 2021/22

The Committee

The Society is managed by a committee in accordance with the Society's Rules. In season 2021/22, the members of the committee were:

Ken Young: Chair
Sally Ripley: Vice-chair
Lynne Cockbill: General Secretary
Peter Aubusson: Treasurer
Pam Firth: Alto Representative
Sam Hensman: Membership Secretary
Alistair Holt-Thomas: General Member (until 12/1/22)
Jonathan Humphries: General Member
David Lee: Bass Representative
Frances Lightowler: General Member
Helen Pitman: Soprano Representative
James Shipp: Concert/Rehearsal Manager
Alison Shipperlee: Ticket Secretary
Debbie Switalska: Marketing Officer
Gareth Truran: Tenor Representative

All committee members, except James Shipp, were trustees of the Society. The Society's Music Director, George Vass, also attends committee meetings by invitation.

Season Overview

After the severe disruption to the Society's activities during 2020/21 due to Covid, it was pleasing to be able to resume rehearsals and concerts in 2021/22. Various new procedures were adopted in recognition of the continuing risks associated with Covid. It was very encouraging that a high proportion of our members returned to rehearsals in September 2021. Over the course of the season other members returned and we were pleased to welcome nine new members. The choir's membership therefore remained close to its pre-Covid level with 106 members paying subscriptions during 2021/22.

Our four concerts featured the usual variety of choral music, the details of which are on pages 3 and 4. We performed a mixture of well-known classics from the choral repertoire, some lesser-known works and several newly composed pieces.

The main work at our Autumn 2021 concert was Rossini's Petite messe solennelle; in the first half of the programme we performed three Bruckner motets conducted by our assistant conductor, Augustina Kapoti. Our Christmas concert included a varied selection of seasonal music, including the premiere of The Hertfordshire Carols by James Francis Brown; this suite of three carols was generously commissioned by Claire Heard, a former choir member, for her friends in the Society and in loving memory of her mother, Mary

Browne, a regular attendee at the choir's concerts. Our April 2022 concert in St Albans Cathedral featured Haydn's Nelson Mass and Richard Blackford's Pieta, co-commissioned by the Society. Our Summer concert celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams with a programme of English music, including three works by Vaughan Williams.

Musically, the season was very successful despite challenges resulting from the Covid hiatus. In the early months, rehearsals were subject to Covid protocols such as pre-rehearsal testing and social distancing. Attendance levels at rehearsals were affected by members needing to isolate due to Covid. During the 2020/21 season, when choirs were forbidden to meet, a programme of online rehearsals had helped members to maintain their singing capabilities. Nevertheless, voices and singing skills needed to be revived when live rehearsals restarted. The choir acquitted itself well at all our concerts and its performances at the April and Summer concerts were very warmly appreciated by audience members.

A further legacy of Covid was that audiences at concerts were significantly depleted from previous levels. In the first half of the season this was partly due to the need to maintain socially distanced seating. To this end we held two separate performances of our Christmas concert on the same day. Throughout the year, audience sizes appeared to be affected by a reduced propensity amongst some previous concert goers to resume attendance at live music events.

The Society was especially appreciative of the efforts of our professional musicians during this difficult season. George Vass, our Music Director, provided valuable advice in addition to continuing to drive the musical standard and development of the choir. The committee thanks George Vass and our accompanist, Richard Harvey, for their contributions and high level of dedication to the choir. In December 2021, our assistant conductor, Augustina Kapoti, resigned to pursue international career opportunities; her contribution over the previous two years was much appreciated. We also thank the four singing teachers who provide individual singing lessons to about 30 members during our Thursday evening rehearsals.

2021/22 Concert Programme

Four concerts were held during the season:

November 2021: *St Saviour's Church, St Albans*

Conductor: Augustina Kapoti

Anton Bruckner *Latin Motets: Locus Iste; Ave Maria; Christus factus est pro nobis*

Conductor: George Vass

Gioachino Rossini *Petite messe solennelle*

December 2021: *Marlborough Road Methodist Church, St Albans*

A Celebration of Christmas including: Carol of the bells - **Peter Wilhousky**; Christmas Day - **Gustav Holst**; The Hertfordshire Carols - **James Francis Brown**; traditional and contemporary carols; and seasonal readings by members of St Albans Choral Society.

April 2022: *The Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban, St Albans*

with Orchestra Nova

Richard Blackford *Pietà*

Joseph Haydn *Missa in Angustis "Nelson Mass"*

June 2022: *St Saviour's Church, St Albans*

Ralph Vaughan Williams Five Mystical Songs; Te Deum in G; O taste and see

Gerald Finzi Lo, the full final sacrifice, Op 26

Herbert Howells Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks

John Ireland Greater love hath no man

Edward Elgar Great is the Lord, Op 67

Community Activities

The Society is committed to contributing to the local community, although the opportunities for this were limited during 2021/22. Nevertheless, £2,090 was raised for three charitable causes: £242 for the Hospice of St Francis by carol singing at St Albans Station; £1,026 at our Christmas concert for Centre 33, a local drop-in centre for homeless and socially or materially disadvantaged people; and £822 at our Summer concert for Youth Talk, which provides free, confidential counselling to 13-25 year olds in the St Albans area. Our previous programme of visits by members of the choir to perform in residential care homes, which had to cease as a result of the pandemic, was not able to resume during 2021/22.

Financial Review

The Society's Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet are on pages 7 and 8. The financial result for season 2021/22 was a deficit of £3,369 (2020/21: a surplus of £1,384). This outcome benefitted from the strong membership level and the resulting subscription income of £19,850. Our income was supplemented by a £3,619 receipt from HMRC for gift aid claimed on subscriptions and donations. We also received a grant of £2,500 from The Williams Church Music Trust towards the cost of our programme for the 2022/23 season. The Society greatly appreciates the support provided by the Trust over many years. Our four concerts produced a total deficit of £14,733. This deficit was larger than in many previous seasons principally due to reduced audience sizes and the consequent lower ticket income.

The year-end balance was £34,456 (2021: £37,825). Our strategy over previous seasons to build and maintain a solid level of assets, as a safeguard against unforeseen circumstances, placed us in a relatively resilient position to withstand the recent and ongoing situation and uncertainties.

As reported previously, in early 2020 we planned to build up a designated Future Fund of reserves, to underpin the choir's continued development. A key objective of this fund was to help ensure that we can continue to perform high-quality concerts in St Albans Cathedral as part of each season's programme. The full launch of this initiative was postponed due to the pandemic. However, some donations to establish the fund were received; these are retained within the Society's overall assets. No further donations were received during 2021/22. The fund stands at £1,445 (including the associated gift aid which has been reclaimed on donations to the fund).

FINANCIAL OUTLOOK FOR THE 2022/23 SEASON

Our activities and concert programme for the season ahead have been planned with a view to maintaining our solid financial position. Nevertheless, inflationary pressures are expected to increase various aspects of our operating costs. Consequently, we forecast to incur a further modest deficit during 2022/23. Our objective is to keep the increase in our costs to a minimum while augmenting our income wherever possible. A key uncertainty is the outlook for audience sizes and ticket revenue at concerts.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The principal risk to the Society is promoting a programme of rehearsals and concerts which might produce a financial result that is substantially worse than expected. We endeavour to manage this risk through considered planning of our concert programme, detailed budgeting, closely controlling our costs and actively publicising our concerts and selling tickets.

The policy of the Committee for many years has been that we should retain a prudent level of reserves sufficient to meet the Society's contractual liabilities based on conservative assumptions about our commitments for rehearsal and concert costs for the next two seasons and possible situations in which we might receive no revenue or insurance payments. This policy and our supporting practices stood us in good stead for dealing with the financial risks and uncertainties associated with Covid, some of which are ongoing. We will continue to manage the financial risks under the current circumstances through the same well-established process.

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

The trustees have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

In pursuing the objects of the Society, the trustees believe that the choir conforms to the requirements of the Charity Commission to provide public benefit through:

- welcoming members of all adult ages and from a wide range of backgrounds and musical capabilities;
- enabling its members to participate in a creative, fulfilling, educational and sociable activity and providing opportunities for them to develop their singing technique, musical skills and knowledge of the choral repertoire;
- promoting public concerts which provide its audiences with enjoyable and stimulating cultural experiences through the high quality of the performances and the interesting range of music featured;
- commissioning and performing new choral works which extend the musical repertoire available for choirs;
- providing opportunities for local school children to participate in choral singing at some of its concerts, thus broadening the musical experience of the pupils;
- performing for residents of local senior living establishments; and
- performing on certain occasions to raise funds for other charitable causes.

OTHER INFORMATION

The Society is affiliated to Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies.

Further information about St Albans Choral Society may be found at our website: www.choralsociety.com

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF ST ALBANS CHORAL SOCIETY (CHARITY NO. 287882)**

I report on the accounts of the Society for the year ended 15 July 2022, which are set out on pages 7 and 8.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Society's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Society'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;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Society 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 respects, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act;
 - 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.

Independent Examiner

Date

Ruth Falkus ACMA
6 Walnut Drive,
Wendover
Bucks
HP22 6RT

18 August 2022

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 15 JULY 2022

	2021/22		2020/21	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Subscriptions	19,850		0	
Future Fund donations	0		250	
Friends and other donations	1,628		8,310	
Grant from The Williams Church Music Trust	2,500		0	
Bank interest – COIF deposit account	76		7	
HMRC gift aid tax repayment	3,619		2,005	
Music and folders hire/purchase	3,016		1,397	
Social events	1,335		0	
Singing lesson room hire – participants' payments	970		0	
Sundries	697		1,782	
Concert income	11,494		0	
		45,185		13,751
Expenditure				
Music Director's fees	(6,355)		(2,750)	
Assistant Conductor's fees	(333)		(4,870)	
Accompanist's fees	(4,885)		(735)	
Répétiteur's fees	(375)		(0)	
Rehearsal venue hire	(2,775)		(828)	
Singing lesson room hire	(1,269)		(0)	
Music and folders hire/purchase	(2,641)		(786)	
Making Music subscription, insurance and PRS payment	(622)		(677)	
Website	(126)		(36)	
Social events	(1,331)		(0)	
Sundries	(1,615)		(1,685)	
Concert expenditure	(26,227)		(0)	
		(48,554)		(12,367)
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year		(3,369)		1,384

BALANCE SHEET

As at:	15 July 2022		15 July 2021	
Assets	£	£	£	£
NatWest Bank current account	4,820		8,265	
COIF Charities Deposit Fund	29,636		29,560	
Year-end balance		34,456		37,825

Represented by:

Accumulated funds

Opening balance	37,825		36,441	
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	(3,369)		1,384	
Year-end balance		34,456		37,825
of which:				
Grant received for the subsequent season	2,500		0	
Future Fund (see page 4)	1,445		1,445	
Other funds	30,511		36,380	

NOTE: CONCERT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	2021/22		2020/21	
	£	£	£	£
Autumn				
Income	2,106		0	
Expenditure	(6,304)		0	
(Deficit)		(4,198)		0
Christmas				
Income	1,683		0	
Expenditure	(2,352)		0	
(Deficit)		(669)		0
Spring				
Income	5,533		0	
Expenditure	(14,423)		0	
(Deficit)		(8,890)		0
Summer				
Income	2,172		0	
Expenditure	(3,148)		0	
(Deficit)		(976)		0
Total				
Income	11,494		0	
Expenditure	(26,227)		0	
(Deficit)		(14,733)		0