

ST ALBANS CHORAL SOCIETY

Registered Charity No 287882

Report and Accounts for the year ended 15 July 2023

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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 2022/23

The Committee

The Society is managed by a committee in accordance with the Society's Rules. In season 2022/23, 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
Jonathan Humphries: General Member
David Lee: Bass Representative
Frances Lightowler: General Member
Helen Pitman: Soprano Representative
Alison Shipperlee: Ticket Secretary
Gareth Truran: Tenor Representative

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

Season Overview

The Society had another successful year performing a varied programme of music to a high standard at five concerts. The choir's membership remained strong with 100 singers, including 10 new members who joined during the 2022/23 season.

Our five concerts featured a wide range of choral music, the details of which are on page 3. The programme included choral works from the last four centuries: established classics of the repertoire, less familiar works by leading composers and several contemporary pieces. The Autumn 2022 concert, in conjunction with the Bushey Symphony Orchestra, featured music by Ralph Vaughan Williams in the 150th anniversary year of his birth. Our Christmas concert comprised a varied selection of seasonal music, including the premiere performance of a new carol. In February 2023 a concert of well-known hymns and church anthems by British composers was conducted by Naomi Jones, the choir's assistant conductor. The April 2023 concert in St Albans Cathedral featured works by Mozart, including his ever-popular Requiem. Our summer concert of music by contemporary British composers presented John Rutter's Requiem and works by Bob Chilcott and Cecilia McDowall.

Since the pandemic, audience sizes at many of our concerts have been lower than previous levels. Although this trend continued for several of our 2022/23 concerts it was encouraging that we had a substantial audience at our April concert and ticket sales for our joint concert with Bushey Symphony Orchestra were stronger than expected.

The choir's continued success is heavily attributable to our team of professional musicians. George Vass has been Music Director of the Society since 1994 and under his leadership the musical standard of the choir has been raised considerably; he has driven its development through his wide-ranging musical skills and experience. Richard Harvey, our accompanist, provides invaluable support during rehearsals and features in many of our concerts as an accomplished organist. Naomi Jones took up the position of assistant conductor in autumn 2022 and the choir has benefitted from her choral coaching and conducting expertise. The committee thanks all three of them for their contributions and dedication to the choir. Our concerts are considerably enhanced by the excellent professional soloists and orchestral players with whom we perform. We also thank the four singing teachers who provide individual singing lessons to about 25 members during our Thursday evening rehearsals.

2022/23 Concert Programme

Five concerts were held during the season:

November 2022: *Grange Academy, Bushey*

with Bushey Symphony Orchestra

Ralph Vaughan Williams Anniversary Concert

Ralph Vaughan Williams Cantata "In Windsor Forest"

Ralph Vaughan Williams Toward the Unknown Region

Ralph Vaughan Williams Serenade to Music

plus several orchestral works

December 2022: *Marlborough Road Methodist Church, St Albans*

A Celebration of Christmas, including: Ave Rex – **William Mathias**; A Babe is Born – **Sarah Francis Jenkins** (world premiere); traditional and contemporary carols; and seasonal readings by members of St Albans Choral Society.

February 2023: *Marlborough Road Methodist Church, St Albans*

Conductor Naomi Jones

Hymns & Anthems

William Byrd *Ave verum corpus*

Herbert Howells *Like as the hart*

Thomas Tallis *If ye love me*

Charles Villiers Stanford *How beauteous are their feet*

Ralph Vaughan Williams *O taste and see; O how amiable*

John Stainer *God so loved the world*

Henry Purcell *Remember not, Lord our offences*

plus popular hymns for audience choir and organ

April 2023: *The Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban, St Albans*

with Orchestra Nova

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *Misericordias Domini*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *Ave verum corpus*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *Requiem in D minor*

June 2023: *St Saviour's Church, St Albans*

With Orchestra Nova Ensemble

Bob Chilcott *Canticles of light*

Cecilia McDowall *Ad lucem – A Canticle of Light*

John Rutter *Requiem*

Community Activities

The Society endeavours to make a positive contribution to the local community. £1,672 was raised through a number of events during the season for our two chosen charitable causes: £545 for the Hospice of St Francis and £1,126 for Centre 33, a local drop-in centre for homeless and socially or materially disadvantaged people.

Financial Review

The Society's Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet are on page 7. The financial result for season 2022/23 was a deficit of £2,660 (2021/22: a deficit of £3,369). This outcome benefitted from a grant of £2,500 received from The Williams Church Music Trust towards the cost of our programme for the 2023/24 season. The Society greatly appreciates the support provided by the Trust over many years.

The year-end balance was £31,796 (2022: £34,456). Our strategy over previous seasons to build and maintain a solid level of assets, as a safeguard against challenging circumstances, has placed us in a relatively resilient position to withstand occasional seasons with adverse results.

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 2022/23. The fund stands at £1,445 (including the associated gift aid which has been reclaimed on donations to the fund).

FINANCIAL OUTLOOK FOR THE 2023/24 SEASON

Our activities and concert programme for the season ahead have been planned with a view to maintaining our solid financial position. Nevertheless, we know that inflationary pressures will increase many of our operating costs, including the hire charges for our rehearsal and concert venues. Consequently, we forecast to incur a further modest deficit during 2023/24. In response to this we will be focusing on augmenting our income, particularly through subscription income and improved concert ticket revenue.

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, which represents and supports amateur vocal, instrumental and promoting societies throughout the United Kingdom.

St Albans Choral Society is grateful for the support of The Williams Church Music Trust.

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 2023, 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
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15 August 2023

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 15 JULY 2023

	2022/23		2021/22	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Subscriptions	19,685		19,850	
Friends and other donations	555		1,628	
Grants from The Williams Church Music Trust	2,500		2,500	
Bank interest – COIF deposit account	787		76	
HMRC gift aid tax repayment	4,190		3,619	
Music and folders hire/purchase	2,500		3,016	
Social events	1,192		1,335	
Singing lesson room hire – participants' payments	1,301		970	
Sundries	660		697	
Concert income (see page 8)	14,126		11,494	
		47,496		45,185
Expenditure				
Music Director's fees	(6,720)		(6,355)	
Assistant Conductor's fees	(0)		(333)	
Accompanist's fees	(5,049)		(4,885)	
Répétiteur's fees	(375)		(375)	
Rehearsal venue hire	(2,792)		(2,775)	
Singing lesson room hire	(1,407)		(1,269)	
Music and folders hire/purchase	(2,668)		(2,641)	
Making Music subscription, insurance and PRS payment	(705)		(622)	
Website	(0)		(126)	
Social events	(1,238)		(1,331)	
Music commission fee	(2,000)		(0)	
Sundries	(506)		(1,615)	
Concert expenditure (see page 8)	(26,696)		(26,227)	
		(50,156)		(48,554)
(Deficit) for the year		(2,660)		(3,369)

BALANCE SHEET

As at:	15 July 2023		15 July 2022	
Assets	£	£	£	£
NatWest Bank current account	11,373		4,820	
COIF Charities Deposit Fund	20,423		29,636	
Year-end balance		31,796		34,456
Accumulated funds				
Opening balance	34,456		37,825	
(Deficit) for the year	(2,660)		(3,369)	
Year-end balance		31,796		34,456
of which:				
Grant received for the subsequent season	2,500		2,500	
Future Fund (see page 4)	1,445		1,445	
Other funds	27,851		30,511	

CONCERT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	2022/23		2021/22	
	£	£	£	£
Autumn				
Income *	0		2,106	
Expenditure *	(1,606)		(6,304)	
(Deficit)		(1,606)		(4,198)
Christmas				
Income	2,570		1,683	
Expenditure	(2,312)		(2,352)	
Surplus/(Deficit)		258		(669)
February				
Income	1,201			
Expenditure	(1,598)			
(Deficit)		(397)		
Spring				
Income	8,707		5,533	
Expenditure	(16,054)		(14,423)	
(Deficit)		(7,347)		(8,890)
Summer				
Income	1,648		2,172	
Expenditure	(5,126)		(3,148)	
(Deficit)		(3,478)		(976)
Total				
Income	14,126		11,494	
Expenditure	(26,696)		(26,227)	
(Deficit)		(12,570)		(14,733)

* Note: the Autumn 2022 concert was held in conjunction with Bushey Symphony Orchestra (BSO), who administered the income and expenditure for the concert; consequently, St Albans Choral Society (SACS) received no income for this concert but the overall deficit on the concert was shared equally between BSO and SACS and 50% of the deficit was paid by SACS to BSO and is shown as expenditure.