

# **ST ALBANS CHORAL SOCIETY**

**Registered Charity No 287882**

## **Report and Accounts for the year ended 15 July 2025**

	<b>Page</b>
Objects of the Society	2
Report for the 2024/25 season	2
Financial Outlook for the 2025/26 season	4
Risk Management	4
Public Benefit Statement	5
Other Information	5
Independent Examiner's Report	6
Income and Expenditure Account	7
Balance Sheet	8
Note: Concert income and expenditure	8

## **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 2024/25 SEASON**

### **The Committee**

The Society is managed by a committee in accordance with the Society's Rules. In season 2024/25, the members of the committee were:

Alison Shipperlee: Chair  
Sally Ripley: Vice-chair  
Frances Lightowler: General Secretary  
Peter Aubusson: Treasurer  
Clare Curtis: General Member (from 26/3/25)  
Pam Firth: Alto Representative  
Clive Flatau: General Member (from 26/3/25)  
Sarah Gooden: Friends/Benefactors Secretary  
Sam Hensman: Membership Secretary  
Jonathan Humphries: Concert Manager  
David Lee: Bass Representative  
Helen Pitman: Soprano Representative  
Julia Rouse: Ticket Secretary  
Amy Sherman: Publicity Officer  
Michelle Thompson: General Member (from 26/3/25)  
Gareth Truran: Tenor Representative

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

### **Season Overview**

The Society celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024/25 with a successful year of high-quality concerts. This was a momentous season in the history of the choir as it was the final one under the inspiring leadership of George Vass, who stood down as Music Director at the season's end after over 30 years in the role. The choir's continuing strong membership of 107 singers included eight new members and several returning members.

The details of our four concerts during 2024/25 are listed on page 3. The programme contained a wide range of music, including several well-known classics from the choral repertoire and various contemporary works. The autumn 2024 concert in St Albans Cathedral drew a large audience to hear J S Bach's Magnificat and Maurice Duruflé's Requiem. As usual, the Christmas concert blended traditional and contemporary seasonal music, including Chanticleer, composed by our former accompanist, Richard James Harvey, and Morten Lauridsen's O Magnum Mysterium. The first half of the April 2025 concert was conducted by George Vass's assistant and chorus master, Naomi Jones, and featured a suite of pieces by Bob Chilcott and Cecilia McDowall's evocative and dramatic work, Everyday Wonders: The Girl from Aleppo; in the second half of the concert, George Vass conducted the renowned Requiem by Gabriel

Fauré. George Vass's farewell concert, in June 2025, was a performance of Joseph Haydn's *The Creation* in which the choir was accompanied by The Blaze Ensemble.

The choir continued to fulfil its objectives of being inclusive, welcoming and sociable, while striving for a high standard of concert performances. Its musical progress and achievements are strongly attributable to the contributions of our team of professional musicians.

George Vass took up the role of Music Director in 1994 and his leadership over subsequent years transformed the choir. He substantially raised the level of musicianship and broadened the range of repertoire performed. George has been a major force in driving the choir's development and bringing the pleasure of music making to its members and audiences alike. The Committee and choir greatly appreciate George's enormous contribution to the Society.

Ed Kemp-Luck became the Society's accompanist in September 2024 and has contributed skilful support during rehearsals and accomplished performances during concerts. Naomi Jones was George Vass's assistant for the past three seasons and enhanced the choir's performances through her coaching and conducting in rehearsals and concerts. The committee thanks all three of the team for their services and dedication to the choir. The choir also greatly appreciates the excellent professional soloists and orchestral players who perform with us and enrich the quality of our concerts.

#### **2024/25 Concert Programme**

Four concerts were held during the season:

**November 2024:** *The Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban, St Albans*

with Orchestra Nova

**Johann Sebastian Bach** *Magnificat in D*

**Francis Poulenc** *Organ Concerto in G minor*

**Maurice Duruflé** *Requiem*

**December 2024:** *St Peter's Church, St Albans*

A Celebration of Christmas, including: **Richard James Harvey** *Chanticleer*, **Gustav Holst** Christmas Day, **Morten Lauridsen** *O Magnum Mysterium*, traditional and contemporary carols; and seasonal readings by members of St Albans Choral Society.

**April 2025:** *St Peter's Church, St Albans*

**Bob Chilcott** *Dances of Time*

**Cecilia McDowall** *Everyday Wonders: The Girl from Aleppo*

**Gabriel Fauré** *Requiem*

**June 2025:** *St Saviour's Church, St Albans*

with The Blaze Ensemble

**Joseph Haydn** *The Creation*

#### **Community Activities**

The Society endeavours to make a positive contribution to the local community. £2,142 was raised during the season at concerts and a Quiz Night for our two chosen charitable causes: £1,003 for the Hospice of St Francis and £1,139 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 pages 7 and 8. The financial result for season 2024/25 was a surplus of £1,380 (2023/24: a surplus of £2,219). The result for the season was better than the budgeted deficit of c. £3,000, principally due to stronger than expected concert ticket revenue and a good level of membership and subscription income. The fulfilment of our programme for the 2024/25 season was materially assisted by a grant of £2,000 received during financial year 2023/24 from The Williams Church Music Trust. A further grant of £2,500 from the Trust, towards the costs of our 2025/26 programme, has also been received since the financial year-end. The Society is very appreciative of these grants and the support we have received from the Trust over many years.

The balance at the end of our financial year 2024/25 was £35,395 (2024: £34,015). Our financial strategy is to maintain a solid level of assets as a safeguard against the risk of unforeseen events or challenging circumstances and bearing in mind that our annual concert cost commitments are over £30,000. The level of our assets places us in a relatively resilient position to withstand occasional seasons when we might have 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 2024/25. The fund stands at £1,445 (including the associated gift aid which was reclaimed on donations to the fund).

## **FINANCIAL OUTLOOK FOR THE 2025/26 SEASON**

Our activities and concert programme for the coming season have been planned with a view to maintaining our solid financial position. We expect to incur further increases to our operating costs, most notably for professional fees and the hire charges for our rehearsal and concert venues. We will therefore be looking to enhance our income from subscriptions and concert ticket sales in order to sustain a healthy financial situation during 2025/26.

## **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 severely reduced, or no, revenue or insurance payments. This policy and our supporting practices have stood us in good stead in recent years. We will continue to manage the financial risks and uncertainties 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 school children to participate in choral singing at some of its concerts, thus broadening the musical experience of the pupils; 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 very grateful for the support of The Williams Church Music Trust.

Further information about St Albans Choral Society may be found at our website:

[www.stalbanschoralsociety.org](http://www.stalbanschoralsociety.org)

**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 2025, 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  
6 Walnut Drive,  
Wendover  
Bucks  
HP22 6RT

19 August 2025

# INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 15 JULY 2025

	2024/25		2023/24	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>				
Members' subscriptions	24,045		23,205	
Friends, Benefactors and other donations	1,045		1,005	
HMRC gift aid tax repayment	4,871		4,606	
Concert tickets and other concert revenue (see page 8)	20,007		17,440	
Grants from The Williams Church Music Trust	0		2,000	
Music and folders hire/purchase	1,969		3,103	
Singing lesson room hire – participants' payments	432		636	
Social events	6,709		1,228	
Sundries	426		420	
Bank interest – COIF deposit account	1,375		1,445	
		<b>60,879</b>		<b>55,088</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Accompanist's rehearsal fees	(4,810)		(5,530)	
Répétiteur's rehearsal fees	(405)		(405)	
Music Director's and Assistant Conductor's rehearsal fees	(7,113)		(7,295)	
Concert expenditure (see page 8):				
Music Director's and Assistant Conductor's fees	(3,325)		(2,900)	
Other concert costs	(28,676)		(25,990)	
Rehearsal venue hire	(3,463)		(3,444)	
Singing lesson room hire	(378)		(672)	
Music and folders hire/purchase	(2,143)		(3,350)	
Making Music subscription, insurance and PRS payment	(1,195)		(776)	
Music commission fees	(0)		(400)	
Website	(124)		(248)	
Social events	(6,758)		(1,354)	
Music Director recruitment	(482)		(0)	
Sundries	(627)		(505)	
		<b>(59,499)</b>		<b>(52,869)</b>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>1,380</b>		<b>2,219</b>

## BALANCE SHEET

As at:	15 July 2025		15 July 2024	
Assets	£	£	£	£
NatWest Bank current account	1,652		4,147	
NatWest Bank deposit account	2,500		0	
COIF Charities Deposit Fund	31,243		29,868	
<b>Year-end balance</b>		<b>35,395</b>		<b>34,015</b>
Represented by:				
<b>Accumulated funds</b>				
Opening balance	34,015		31,796	
Surplus for the year	1,380		2,219	
<b>Year-end balance</b>		<b>35,395</b>		<b>34,015</b>
of which:				
Grant received for the subsequent season	0		2,000	
Future Fund (see page 4)	1,445		1,445	
Other funds	33,950		30,570	

## CONCERT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	2024/25		2023/24	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Autumn</b>				
Income	9,816		9,839	
Expenditure	(18,218)		(14,797)	
(Deficit)		<b>(8,402)</b>		<b>(4,958)</b>
<b>Christmas</b>				
Income	2,865		2,349	
Expenditure	(2,147)		(2,057)	
Surplus		<b>718</b>		<b>292</b>
<b>Spring</b>				
Income	4,144		2,440	
Expenditure	(3,737)		(9,757)	
Surplus/(Deficit)		<b>407</b>		<b>(7,317)</b>
<b>Summer</b>				
Income	3,182		2,812	
Expenditure	(7,899)		(2,279)	
(Deficit)/Surplus		<b>(4,717)</b>		<b>533</b>
<b>Total</b>				
Income	20,007		17,440	
Expenditure (*)	(32,001)		(28,890)	
(Deficit)		<b>(11,994)</b>		<b>(11,450)</b>

\*of which Music Director's and Assistant Conductor's fees were £3,325 in 2024/25 and £2,900 in 2023/24.