

Hackney Singers

Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 31st August 2024 Registered Charity number 294564

Charitable Objectives

To promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of choral music in all its aspects by the presentation of public concerts and recitals and to advance such other charitable purposes as the committee may from time to time decide. The Committee engages a Music Team to facilitate its charitable objectives.

Government arrangements

The Choir is managed by a committee. The members of the committee are the Trustees of the charity and are elected by the Members of the Choir at the AGM.

The Committee comprises the chair, treasurer, secretary and not less than two other members; the officers and the other committee members shall be elected by and out of the Society's members at a general meeting and may co-opt new Committee members (but no more than 25% of the elected Committee). There shall be no more than 12 members of the committee.

Committee members and Trustees

Gary Greene (chair)
Sheila Ebbutt (treasurer)
Rhian Beynon (secretary)
Cathie O'Driscoll
Jonathan Koestle-Cate
Jane Gibson
Tony Price
Sally Williams
Yvonne Sired
Carole Sired
Arthur Davis

Public Benefit

The trustees of the Hackney Singers 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.

Activities and achievements

2023/24 was a highly successful season for the choir. Our repertoire, managed by our musical director Dan Ludford-Thomas, has proved successful at both attracting large audiences and improving the skills and range of the singers. The overall experience of membership of the choir, musically and socially and our growing reputation has maintained our membership at 142. The season started in Autumn 2023 with a concert at St Matthias church, Stoke Newington. It comprised pieces by eastern European composers Górecki, Dvořák and Kodály ranging from late 19th to early 20th centuries. They were diverse, exciting pieces which challenged the choir and entranced the large audience. Our usual Christmas concert at St Peter de Beauvoir and carol singing in Broadway Market raised over £2,000 for Hackney Night Shelter.

In spring 2024 we presented the Monteverdi Vespers supported by His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornets at the magnificent St John at Hackney. This was a monumental piece of great complexity. This was delivered with energy, power and drama. It was presented to a full house of over 600. St John at Hackney used to be a regular venue for the choir. We stopped using it for many years whilst it went through a complete refurbishment and its very

much a home for the choir and we plan to present regular concerts at this magnificent church. Membership remained at a high level throughout the year. The repertoire chosen the spring concert proved to be a considerable draw and ended at 142 with a waiting list for some parts. The choir is still maintaining a no-audition policy. Open access is a fundamental ethos of the choir and it doesn't seem to inhibit the learning process nor performance. The teaching and practising are designed such that it works for both experienced members as well as new starters.

Community is a vital component of membership. The weekly rehearsals provide a much-needed opportunity for social engagement for many isolated members. In November, current and previous members attended the choir's 50th anniversary party. Many have been members for decades. The choir is a large part of some members' lives and contributes to their social as well as creative needs.

Financial review

Reserves.

We started the year with £37,764 in the bank and ended with £23,075. This level is significantly within the policy of having 6 months costs, or roughly 2 concerts. Each concert (apart from Royal Festival Hall) is budgeted to lose about £5,000 to £7,000. This is a function of increasing venue charges, the cost of hiring professional musicians and our policy of keeping ticket prices affordable.

The choir showed a deficit of £14,690 over the year. We consider this to be reasonable because we have not yet claimed our Gift Aid which we estimate will be about £5,000. This will be shown in next year accounts. Nor do we show any income from our biennial Royal Festival Hall concerts which historically have provided an additional income of over £6,000. This is planned for 2024/5. The ongoing financial viability of the Hackney Singers is based on the additional income every other year from concerts. This has traditionally been profitable although clearly there is no guarantee. As we have not identified other sources of revenue, there is a clear risk to the choir should the Festival Hall concerts cease to provide a strong positive source of income.

Membership fees were increased to £200 pa. The choir has a policy of having relatively low membership fees compared to other choirs in the locality and more broadly. The choir also has a policy of keeping ticket prices affordable. These are under annual review and in the short term will need to be increased.

Risks

As we have not identified other sources of revenue, there is a clear risk to the choir should the Festival Hall concerts cease to provide a strong positive source of income. The continual involvement of Dan Ludford-Thomas and Andrew Storey as a powerful music team is critical to the future of the choir in its current form. They set the tone and personality of the choir which is fundamental to its attraction to members and the high musical standard of performances.

Hackney Singers			
Receipt and Payments Account			
Year ended 31 August 2024			
Receipts		2023-24	2022-23
Gifts, donations and other voluntary receipts			
	Membership fees	£ 23,487	£23,498
	Gift Aid refund from HMRC	£ -	£4,617
	Donations	£ 1,097	£2,097
Membership receipts and Donations		£ 24,584	£30,212
	Charitable trading		
	Concert Income	£ 11,084	£13,959
	Non-charitable trading	£ -	£ -
	Advertising in programmes etc	£ 940	£2,020
	Trading receipts	£ 12,024	£15,979
	Charity collections	£ 2,721	
	Other receipts	£ 3,278	£636
	Bank interest	£ -	£ -
Total Receipts		£ 42,606	£46,827
Payments			
	Music purchase & hire	£ 2,160	£2,570
	Rehearsal costs	£ 20,628	£15,485
	Concert costs	£ 26,459	£11,028
	Publicity & fundraising costs	£ 1,034	£ -
	Management and administration	£ 661	£1,109

Other payments			
	Costs of goods for resale (inc bar costs)	£ -	£ -
	Disbursement of funds	£ -	£ -
	Donations	£ 2,721	£1,609
	Subs refund	£ 185	£902
	Other	£ 3,448	£724
Total Payments		£ 57,296	£33,428
NET ANNUAL SURPLUS/(SHORTFALL)		£ (14,690)	£13,399
Assets and liabilities at 31 August 2024		£23,074	£37,764
Bank			
Other assets		nil	nil

Signed



Chair 14 January 2025

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF HACKNEY SINGERS

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Hackney Singers (the Charity) for the year ended 31 August 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity 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 Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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



Mr J P Foxwell FCCA FCIE
independent-examiner.net

PO Box 9846, Poole, BH15 9JZ

Date: 19 January 2025