

# OXFORD YOUTH CHOIRS

## ANNUAL REPORT OF TRUSTEES

**For the Year to 15th August 2021**  
**Presented to the AGM, Saturday, 11.00am,**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> July 2022**



*Registered charity number 299109*

### **[A] Legal and Administrative Information**

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#### **1. Trustees**

Jon Livesey	<i>Chair</i>
Geoff Sutton	<i>Treasurer</i>
Nick Wenban-Smith	<i>Honorary Secretary</i>
Nilanjana Banerji	
Charlotte Hicks	
David Jones	
Esther Livesey	
Liisa O'Connor	
Lydia Vella	
Maria Finnis	
Eleanor Williamson	

#### **2. Music staff**

Richard Vendome	<i>Musical Director</i>
Penelope 'Peps' Martin-Smith	<i>Associate Musical Director</i> <i>and Director, Boys' Programme</i>
David Palmer	<i>Boys' Programme teacher</i>
Daisy Livesey	
Hannah Rhodes	<i>Prep Choirs</i>
Lucia Boue	<i>Prep Choirs</i>
Monica Nelson	<i>Prep Choirs – maternity cover</i>
Louise Taylor	<i>Junior Girls' Choir</i>
Tom Anderson	<i>Junior Girls' Choir</i>
Margaret Lingas	<i>Vocal Coach</i>

#### **3. Administrator**

Eve Madeley-Wyatt, 16 Swinbourne Road, Littlemore, Oxford, OX4 4PQ

#### **4. Charities correspondent**

Eve Madeley-Wyatt, 16 Swinbourne Road, Littlemore, Oxford, OX4 4PQ

#### **5. Bankers**

CAF bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ  
Barclay's Bank PLC, Oxford City Branch

## **6. Independent examiner**

Peter Stephenson, 8 Harbord Road, Oxford, OX2 8LJ

## **7. Objectives (from clause 2 of the constitution)**

The objects of the Choir shall be to promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects through the training of girls and boys in singing and musicianship and by the presentation of public concerts and recitals and by other ways as the Choirs through their committee shall determine from time to time.

## **8. Structure**

The Registered Charity is the responsibility of Trustees who are parents acting in a voluntary capacity. The Choirs are managed by a Committee made up of the Trustees and the Musical Director, with other music staff and the part-time administrator in attendance.

OYS provides vocal training to the highest standard for children aged 4-18, in pursuit of its charitable objectives. Musical direction and training of the children is the responsibility of the Musical Director. Rehearsals are on Saturday mornings through school term at Cherwell School. Choirs comprise: Senior Girls, Junior Girls, Boys, Junior Boys, and Prep 1 and Prep 2.

## **9. Charitable status**

Oxford Youth Choirs is a registered charity: number 299109.

## **[B] Treasurer's Report**

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The 2020/2021 financial year was the year Covid really impacted the Choir's finances and membership. Membership income dropped for the 2nd year running to below £30,000 but so did teaching time with a consequent drop in costs. While the charity made a loss in the 2020/2021 financial year, the drop in membership income was again, like the previous year, offset by the avoidance of costs associated with live performances which historically have rarely broken-even. The choir continued to support families hit by the 2nd Covid lockdown in January 2021 with the trustees continuing to suspend some fees for those families who were facing dire financial circumstances but whose children were participating enthusiastically in the online learning session. The trustees felt it was better to keep the children on-roll and support them rather than ask them to leave while their parents experienced a temporary drop in

income. Compared with 2019/20, the amount required was far less as some parents were able to recommence paying membership fees once their incomes recovered. The Choir continues to benefit from the use of the integrated administration service provided by Loveadmin which helped to keep admin costs down. The Charity also invested in a good 2nd hand piano for use at Cherwell, the purchase being financed by donations. Overall, it was a tough year but the choir came through the worst of the pandemic, putting it in a good position to continue as life returned to normal.

## **[C] Chair's Report**

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### **1. Trustees**

The year started with new Chair Ed Conroy taking over from Jon Livesey. Due to the lack of incoming new trustees and the precarious position relating to covid-lockdown and the future of the choir, Nick Wenban-Smith agreed to continue as Secretary and Jon and Esther Livesey stayed on as trustees. Ed quickly set-about planning for covid-safe rehearsals, from the end of September. This welcome return to face-to-face singing was short-lived and after half-term, our online Zoom offer was revived. Shortly before the start of the Spring term, Ed tendered his resignation and Jon Livesey was asked to return to act as interim Chair.

Four new trustees have since been appointed during spring-term (Liisa O'Connor, Lydia Vella, Maria Finnis and Eleanor Williamson).

### **2. Staff matters**

The staff complement remained stable throughout the year. Because the lockdown enforced rehearsals on Zoom, we were happy to retain the services of Peps Martin-Smith, despite her relocation to France (until Easter 2021). We welcomed back Amy Chang (former accompanist) to teach Senior Girls and former Head Girl, Daisy Livesey to teach Boys Choir and Senior Girls.

Monica Nelson has continued her association with OYC and has started a 'Mini-Music' group for pre-school children - this started as an online offer and has progressed to face-to-face meetings at Cherwell.

### **2. The year's events in summary**

Sessions started in September on Zoom, but soon plans were afoot to carry out risk assessments and produce guidance to allow the choir to return to face-to-face rehearsals at Cherwell (following the guidance for children's 'out of school hours activities'). The obvious excitement of

singing together was sadly short-lived and at the start of November the second lockdown sent us back to Zoom.

The teachers continued to finesse the various Zoom presentations. The senior girls' choir provided a mix of whole group and smaller tuition groups to improve the contact between tutors and girls by utilizing the breakout-room feature in Zoom.

Thankfully, the introduction of the government's roadmap in April allowed the choir to return once more to face-to-face rehearsals after Easter, with virtually the same covid-restrictions in place as in October (once again, following the guidance for children's 'out of school hours activities'). Group sizes were again limited to 15, meaning more, shorter sessions. This was made possible by calling on up to five teachers for Senior Girls.

The rehearsals could not have taken place without the support of parent-helpers whose efforts we are very grateful for.

Despite the continuing commitment of teachers, choir-members and parents the one thing we haven't been able to achieve has been live-performances. Nonetheless, our new found online skills have produced a number of recorded-performances, as follows:

- 30 June 2020 - The Prayer *Junior Girls*
- 21 December 2020 OAC carols *Senior Girls*
- 24 December 2020 Oxford Youth Choirs Christmas Video *all choirs*
- 14 March 2021 Mothering God (arr. by Richard Vendome) *Senior Girls*
- 8 April 2021 Winter-Time (composition by Will Inscoe) *Boys Choir*
- 1 May 2021 Tosca rehearsal *Senior Girls*
- 11 July 2021 Set me as a seal *Senior Girls*

It should also be noted that the choir was able to buy a good quality second-hand piano to (replace the tired one provided by Cherwell School) due to the generosity of Choir Patrons who donated £1600. This is also a huge tribute to the choir and the esteem with which they hold it. We are very grateful for their continuing support.

### **3. Looking forward**

This year has tested the enthusiasm of our members, ingenuity and perseverance of our teachers and commitment of trustees. Inevitably,

there has been a slight drop in the overall roll (about 20%) but the choir morale remains high. At the time of writing, the government look set to substantially reduce the covid restrictions. This is clearly good news for the prospects of the choir in terms of continuing to rehearse and the potential for performances. Of course, we must still put the safety of our members first and are ever-mindful of the possibility of a recurrent Covid-outbreak. So, while many are bursting for change, our approach must be ambitious but careful.

Changes will come, though. David Palmer and Daisy Livesey (who have both taught the Boys Choir and supported teaching in Senior Girls) are leaving to further their academic studies and a replacement-post has been advertised.

Despite the problems created by Covid, Richard Vendome remains as ambitious as ever, treating the pandemic as an interruption, not a show-stopper. His vision and enthusiasm continues to drive the choir forward. Our aim is to continue to support novel and rewarding projects that stretch the girls and provide unique openings to develop their experience. We are determined that Covid's intervention will not dim this ambition, albeit the means must adapt to take account of new challenges.

None of this would be possible without the professionalism and dedication of our wonderful teachers. Although the teaching staff has again undergone some changes, it continues to be hugely talented and committed. Their willingness to work in unfamiliar ways and much longer hours in response to Covid was remarkable and very welcome - thank you all so much - the choir simply couldn't continue without you!

I did not expect (or want) to find myself by in the role of Chair again this year. Despite my initial reluctance, it has been rewarding to steer the choir through the pandemic with the prospect of a bright future awaiting. This is my final term as Chair and can reflect on five years of hugely rewarding effort, made possible by trustees, teachers and choir members (past and present) who have made the experience enormously enjoyable. My thanks go to you all.

*Jon Livesey  
Interim Chair  
2<sup>th</sup> July 2022*

## **[D] Musical Director's Report**

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One of our distinguished patrons described the coronavirus situation as a "palaver" - for him a strong word. We have probably asked ourselves the

same questions as other music groups. How long will this go on for? Should we suspend our activities until things improve? Is singing such a dangerous mechanism for Covid infection? Fortunately some of our choir parents work on the inside of coronavirus research, and have been able to help us navigate through the often contradictory information coming from official sources.

The past year and a half has been an exercise in finding new ways of working and in holding our nerve. I have have spent my Saturday mornings hosting Zoom sessions from my desk, observing David and Daisy working with the boys, and running Senior Choir sessions during lockdown. Tom and Louise with the Juniors and Hannah and Lucia with the Preps have run parallel operations, with great success. Recently we have launched two exciting new groups, "Mini Music", for babies and toddlers, and "Training Club", directed by Margaret, which provides a bridge between the Junior and Senior Choirs. From my perspective, producing online material and "Saturday at Noon" talks has been more successful than running rehearsals on Zoom, mainly because of the demoralising effect of muting the singers, especially the mid-teens, who seem the most affected by isolation. It is devastating to see that some high-fliers have lost all confidence, whereas our Alumnae singers (aged 20-50) have rehearsed with great gusto in glorious silence. The Senior Choir in particular will need a lot of work to make a full recovery. I'm grateful for the kind support of most of our families, but am frankly disappointed that some have chosen to abandon us during this challenging and unprecedented situation, making our task even harder.

Last year we said farewell to Peps, who has worked with us for a quarter of a century and following Brexit has now relocated to France. Her son George (a founder member of our Boys' Choir, who produces some of our YouTube videos) is now Assistant Organist at Norwich Cathedral, and younger son Will is studying at the Guildhall, where he will soon be joined by David Palmer, our brilliant Boys' Choir director and girls' accompanist. During her gap year Daisy has assisted with the boys' and senior girls' choirs, before moving on to study singing at the Royal Academy of Music. This term Iselin Fraser has taken the ARSM diploma before going to Norway to continue her studies, and Celeste Lingas has followed in her sister's footsteps with an exceptional high distinction in grade 8 singing.

Last but not least I thank our dedicated chairman, Jon Livesey, who with Esther's support has given us five years of efficient and unstinting service.

RV 2/7/22



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name  
Oxford Youth Choirs

No (if any)  
299109

## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date 8/16/2020	To	Period end date 8/15/2021
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### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>				
Subscriptions	29,925	-	-	29,925
Concerts	90	-	-	90
Other events	1,380	-	-	1,380
Donations	17	1,600	-	1,617
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b> (Gross income for AR)	31,412	1,600	-	33,012
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>				
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Total receipts</b>	31,412	1,600	-	33,012
<b>A3 Payments</b>				
Music tuition fees	21,418	-	-	21,418
Concert expenses	1,507	-	-	1,507
Purchase of piano	-	1,600	-	1,600
Administrator expenses	4,680	-	-	4,680
Rent and storage costs	2,646	-	-	2,646
Other running costs	2,306	-	-	2,306
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	32,557	1,600	-	34,157
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>				
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	32,557	1,600	-	34,157
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	- 1,145	-	-	- 1,145
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	21,825	-	-	21,825
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	20,680	-	-	20,680

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	CAF Gold Account	10,038	-
	CAF Cash Account	10,542	-
	Barclays Bank	100	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>20,680</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-
			-
			-
			-
			-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	Independent examiner fee	Unrestricted	100
	Teaching & rehearsal fees	Unrestricted	1,977
			-
			-
			-

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

Signature	Print Name



## CC16a

Last year

to the nearest £

35,559
3,017
15
588
-
-
-
-
39,179

-
-
-

39,179
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27,713
4,477
-
4,632
2,325
2,701
-
-
-
41,848

-
-
-

41,848
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-	2,669
-	-
24,494	-
21,825	-



**Endowment  
funds**  
to nearest £

-
-
-
-

OK

**Endowment  
funds**  
to nearest £

-
-
-
-
-
-

**Current value  
(optional)**

-
-
-
-
-

**Current value  
(optional)**

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

**When due  
(optional)**


Date of  
approval




**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Charity Name  
Oxford Youth Choirs

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

15/08/2021

**Charity no  
(if any)**

299109

**Set out on pages**

1 and 2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 15/08/2020.

**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:**

Peter J. Stevenson

**Date:**

10/06/2022

**Name:**

Peter J Stevenson

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

FCA

**Address:**

8 Harbord Road

Oxford

OX2 8LJ