

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE GUILD OF SINGERS

England & Wales · Charity number 299626

Details

Other names NORTH HERTS GUILD OF SINGERS

Status Registered

Legal form Other

Registered 1990-03-09

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address 40 Shephall Green
Stevenage
SG2 9XS

Phone 01438 365918

Email enquiries@nhgs.org.uk

Website www.nhgs.org.uk

Activities

Objects: I) TO PROMOTE, IMPROVE, DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN PUBLIC EDUCATION IN, AND APPRECIATION OF, THE ART AND SCIENCE OF MUSIC IN ALL ITS ASPECTS BY THE PRESENTATION OF PUBLIC CONCERTS AND RECITALS AND BY SUCH OTHER WAYS AS THE CHARITY THROUGH ITS COMMITTEE SHALL DETERMINE FROM TIME TO TIME.II) TO SUPPORT OTHER CHARITABLE PURPOSES THROUGH OUR MUSICAL ACTIVITIES AS THE TRUSTEES IN THEIR ABSOLUTE DISCRETION SHALL THINK FIT.?

Activities: To provide an opportunity for the people of North Hertfordshire and surrounding areas to participate in choral singing.To perform choral concerts at reasonable prices for the people of North Hertfordshire and surrounding areas.

Classification

- **How:** Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Education/training, Arts/culture/heritage/science
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Hertfordshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-07-31	£49,244	£44,042	-	-
2024-07-31	£43,567	£43,601	-	-
2023-07-31	£43,595	£40,782	-	-
2022-07-31	£29,907	£26,290	-	-
2021-07-31	£23,462	£16,837	-	-
2020-07-31	£35,175	£27,559	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
DAVID JAMES TINNEY	Chair	2015-09-17
ANNE MARGARET BLACKMAN		2020-03-04
CHRISTINE IRIS GOODWIN		2017-09-17
DEBORAH JANE DEAN		2024-09-26
DIANE RICHARDS		2017-09-17
JANE ANN KIRK		2021-09-23
Katharine Rowe		2023-05-02
PHILIP ROWE		2025-09-25
SUSAN BARBARA CLARK		2023-10-10

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE GUILD OF SINGERS

England & Wales - Charity number 299626

Accounts

**(FINAL) Minutes of the 53rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Held on Thursday 25 September
2025 at 7.30 at Benslow Music Trust**

1. Apologies:

Marion Bradbury, Liz Sillars, Brian Holmes, Barbara James, Jess Peyton Jones, Sarah Martinelli, Gillian Hawkins, Martin Shreeves, Jeremy Goodwyn, Rita Beasley, Sue McKenzie, Rosemary Read, Becca Brear, Jill Butler, Anna Carter, Wendy Hazelwood, Sue Lemmon, Liz Tyrrell, Ella-Kate Whitehead, Deborah Woods

Number in attendance: 81 members

2. Minutes of the 52nd AGM held on Thursday 26 September 2024.

The minutes were unanimously approved and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising

None arising.

4. Chair's Report

In the 57th year of the Guild, the choir has performed four concerts and held a workshop, continuing our aims of providing high quality music for the North Hertfordshire area. The first concert of the season was held on 16th November 2024 at St Mary's, Hitchin, with a performance of CPE Bach's Magnificat and Handel's Dettingen Te Deum. The choir was accompanied by four soloists and Musica Donum Dei with Colin on the organ, with a good-sized audience in attendance. A medical emergency in the audience caused an interruption but eventually the performance was successfully concluded. The charity, On To It/Days for Girls, provided the refreshments, raising £321 for that charity.

The next concert included a performance of Oliver Tarney's Missa Media Nocte with traditional carols. This was held on 7th December 2024 at Walsworth Road Baptist Church but without the accompaniment of the Garden House Hospice Christmas Tractor procession. Although a smaller audience than usual, a profit of £566 was made and the refreshments raised £154 for the church. Thanks to Deborah Dean, a grant of £200 was received from the County Councillor Richard Thake's Locality budget, which helped with the purchase of the Tarney music. Two pre-Christmas events took place, with the wearing of Christmas jumpers to the final rehearsal of 2024 raising £89 for the choir's funds, and on 14th December, a small group of choir members once again sang at the Lister hospital. We were unable to visit the wards due to a possible Covid scare but sang in the main entrance corridor where we raised £76 for the hospital charity, and received a very appreciative letter.

The major concert of the year saw the choir back on 29th March 2025 at the Coptic Centre in Stevenage, a venue that we had not performed in for some years. The Beaufoy Sinfonia with four soloists accompanied the choir in a programme of Mozart's C Minor Mass, his Linz symphony no.36 and Hadyn's *Insanae et Vanae Curae*. More thanks go to Deborah Dean, who stepped in as the concert manager, assisted Frances Chamberlain with the refreshments for the orchestra and soloists, and obtained a grant of £2000 from the Williams Church Music Trust towards the running of the concert. Although audience numbers were lower than expected, the concert made a smaller loss than expected, but many appreciative comments were received and the Coptic Centre were very helpful with the running of the concert. We will be back at the Coptic Centre in March 2026 for a performance of Vaughan William's *Sea Symphony*.

Another very successful workshop was held at Christchurch on 24th May 2025, with work carried out on Faure's *Requiem* and the morning ended with a performance of it using choir members as soloists. The workshop was attended by 87, made up of 46 choir members and 41 non-choir members. Another cake sale, thanks to Sue Covington, and a music sale raised £109 for the choir's funds, with Christchurch providing refreshments.

The final concert of the year on 12th July 2025, held at Walsworth Road Baptist Church, featured a programme entitled "A Fancy of Folk". This moved away from the usual repertoire with arrangements of traditional folksongs from different parts of the British Isles, with the soloist accompanying herself on the guitar. The concert was very well attended, in spite of the very hot weather, and the church once again provided the refreshments.

A surplus of over £5000 has been achieved through increased membership, profits from the Christmas and Summer concerts, the workshop, Easyfundraising, pencil sales, thanks to Pam Blackburn, and assistance from the grants already mentioned. This may sound a good sum, but the costs of putting on big concerts must be noted, with next year being no exception with the spring concert of the *Sea Symphony*.

We should have had a social event of Pimms on the lawn after the rehearsal on 20th June 2025. However, this had to be cancelled due to Benslow not giving us a quote for the drinks in time to organise the event.

A choir tour to the Netherlands in the Autumn of 2026 is currently being explored, however more participants are needed to ensure that this tour takes place.

Current membership is about 127 with more new members this year. Please help to encourage anyone who is thinking of joining to do so, as membership and concert tickets sales are our main sources of income. Pat Salmon, our current membership secretary, is stepping down from this role which she has carried out for many years, so we are looking for a member to take on this position. Thank you, Pat, for your work in this position.

Once again, I am very grateful to the committee members, especially Chris Goodwin, Secretary, and Diane Richards, Treasurer, and everyone else involved in the weekly running of the choir and concert preparations throughout the year.

Thank you also for the work of our two excellent professionals, Harry and Colin, for bringing their commitment, enthusiasm and knowledge of music to the choir.

Let's hope we have another successful season as the North Herts Guild of Singers moves into its 58th year.

Dave Tinney (Chair NHGS)

5. Music Director's Report.

The 2024-25 season was another very successful one for the North Herts Guild of Singers. As usual, we tackled a wide variety of repertoire and I have been so impressed by the way in which everyone has committed to the demands of each concert.

We began our season with CPE Bach's Magnificat, (a super piece and one which deserves credit in its own right and not only in comparison with JS Bach's piece of the same name) and Handel's Dettingen Te Deum. The Guild approached the fierce and challenging choruses, particularly in the CPE, without fear and gave an excellent performance at St Mary's Church alongside the period instrumental ensemble Musica Donum Dei and soloists Daisy Livesey, Helena Cooke, Zahid Siddiqui and Allyn Wu. Despite a potential medical emergency which was dealt with ably by our in-house medical team, and very welcome singing advice from a double bass player, the concert was a great success.

I've often wondered whether it might be time for me to write a piece for choir, organ and tractor ensemble for the Guild's Christmas concerts but strangely this year we managed to get lucky with our timing on this particular date. Perhaps another year, but we were in welcome contemporary company with Oliver Tarney's Missa Media Nocte based on traditional French Christmas carols alongside our usual potpourri of Carols for Choirs favourites. We were joined by guest organist Richard Leach and it was great to see a full Walsworth Road enjoying our festive offerings.

Our March concert saw us make a long-awaited return to the Coptic Centre in Stevenage, the venue of my first ever concert with the Guild back in 2019. We had a lot of fun preparing the choruses for the Mozart C Minor mass and Haydn's Insanae et Vanae Curae and I really enjoyed working on this in lots of detail. The concert was a real highlight of the season for me and it was great to be joined by the Beaufoy Sinfonia alongside soloists Natalka Pasciznyk, Maya Wheeler-Colwell, Louis Watkins and Henry Saywell, all of whom performed the roles with aplomb.

Summer saw us venture into the world of folk songs with Rutter's beautiful Sprig of Thyme, McDowall's deceptively tricky Fancy of Folksongs and some classic arrangements by Rutter,

Wilcocks and more. This repertoire was possibly the most challenging of the season, especially the rhythmic patterns of the McDowall and the huge a cappella arrangements that split into many parts in the OUP Folksongs book, but stretching us as a choir is a good thing and we really rose to the challenge in our concert at Walsworth Road. We were joined by Colin on piano and soprano Lottie Day who performed a wide variety of folk and folk-inspired songs, sometimes accompanying herself on the guitar. A suitably summery end to our season of music.

To sum up, another good season of music making. I'm extremely proud of all the concerts and events we put on. As always, I'd like to say a big thank you to our wonderful accompanist Colin we are so lucky to work with a musician of his quality every week. This season has seen him playing, conducting and also singing with the choir, is there no end to what I will ask this man to do!

Also a huge thank you to Dave, Chris, Diane and our wonderful committee for all their support. They have managed the year superbly and are a pleasure to deal with. Thank you also to everyone who does jobs for the choir on a regular basis, from putting the chairs out to giving orchestral players lifts to sourcing music stands to social media publicity – it all makes a huge difference and all these little cogs really make the NHGS machine work in the way it does. Thank you.

Lastly a thank you to you all for your continued support and trusting me with the musical direction of the choir. We've got a big season ahead of us, particularly with RVW Sea Symphony in the pipeline and I for one am really looking forward to it.

Harry Bradford (MD NHGS)

6. Treasurer's report for the year 2023-2024

The Treasurer presented her report, as follows, together with the financial statement for the year. Before doing so, Diane took the opportunity to thank Deborah Dean for grants secured during the year; Rita and Dave Beasley for all their work and time selling concert tickets and organising the team of stewards; Pam Blackburn for helping with ticket sales and Frances Chamberlain and her family for all the Front of House work at the concerts.

I attach the NHGS accounts for the year 2024-25 which are presented in the format expected by the Charity Commission

Thanks to the continued financial support of the Members and the hard work of our professionals we were able to hold four concerts, (two with a small orchestra), and a workshop this year. A surplus of £5,202 was made this year thanks to a few grants and donations, an increase in membership, and a successful workshop, Christmas and Summer concerts which all made surpluses.

The key differences in income and expenditure between the financial year 2024-25 and the previous year are:

1. **Grants** This year we have received an additional £400 in grants from the Herts County Council's Locality Budget Scheme which partially subsidised the cost of music for the Christmas concert and a generous £2000 from the Williams Church Music Trust towards the cost of the orchestra at the Autumn concert. These are shown in Note 5: Grants, legacies and general donations. My thanks go to Deborah Dean, former Chair, for obtaining these grants.
2. **Administrative costs** Performing rights fees have increased by 60% to £377. Formally fees were based on the number of concert attendees, but now they are based on 3.25% of gross ticket income. The general administrative costs doubled this year to include £441 covering 3-year refresher courses for our two first aiders.
3. **Concert** income has decreased by 6.3% to £9401, but costs decreased this year too by 4.8% to £21,782. The number of tickets sold this year has also decreased by 5.8%
4. **Accruals** –Debtors and payments in advance consist of £200 venue deposits for concerts in future years, £287 advance payments for 2025/6 music, £3 flyers for the Autumn 25 concert and £378 Summer concert ticket income from Hitchin Festival.
5. The total **reserves** has increased to £59,073. These are made up of three components, namely the unrestricted (free) reserves of £48,858, the tour reserve of £240, and £9975 set aside to cover the cost of depreciation of our staging. The readily available (cash) reserve is currently £54,027

Thanks to the generous support from Members and cost savings made by the Committee and the Music Director we are fortunate to be in a financially good position at the moment. My thanks go to Members who gave donations in addition to their membership fee and the 11 members who transferred from monthly payments to paying the fee on an annual basis which greatly helps our cash flow particularly during the Spring term. Membership numbers rose to 127 this year – the highest since the pandemic which has also contributed to this year's surplus. However Membership fees and ticket sales do not cover the entire cost of the music programmes planned for future years and we rely heavily on fundraising, grants and recently, bank interest to meet the shortfall. In addition we need to plan finances so that within 3 years we will have the resources to renew our staging whenever this becomes necessary. (See reserves policy). Thank you to our extremely talented professionals and to all Members, friends and relatives who have continued to support the Guild. You can be assured that the Trustees will endeavour to manage the finances as best we can to ensure the long-term future of the Guild.

Chris Blackman proposed that the financial report should be accepted, and this was seconded by Ed Twomey. All were in favour.

7. Annual subscription for the 2024-2025 season

The Committee proposed that the subscription should be increased by £12 to £246 per annum. Diane explained that, in setting the budget for the forthcoming season, she has based the costings on a membership of 120, a 5% increase in costs and an unknown programme for the summer concert. The proposed increase is in line with the current RPI rate of inflation.

There was a query from the floor as to whether, given that there was a £5,202 surplus last year and the reserves are comparatively healthy, an increase was necessary. Diane explained that the surplus was largely made possible by the grants, a successful workshop and the Christmas and Summer concerts which both made a surplus. She also pointed out that there has been a general decline in audience numbers in recent years and that it is the ticket sales as well as membership fees that are largely responsible for the choir's income. Diane also explained that she is managing the reserves to take account of the depreciation of the choir's staging so that, when it needs replacing, there are sufficient funds to cover the cost.

Diane also reminded the members that we have a very expensive concert (c 15K) next Spring. Our November and Summer concerts have been planned accordingly and will not include an orchestra. She also reminded the meeting that there could be unforeseen costs and increases. The choir might wish to return to St Mary's for some of our concerts. Following the recent building work there, the hire charge could be significantly more than for our last visit.

There was some discussion concerning whether the level of subscription might deter some people from joining the choir. Diane pointed out that, as a large choir performing large works, we need large venues in which to rehearse and perform, which inevitably increases our costs. It was pointed out from the floor that a subscription level of £246 for a season of 39 weeks equates to a cost of c £6.30 per rehearsal. This also includes the concerts. An hourly rate of c £3.15 compares very favourably with other evening classes/leisure activities.

Dave and Diane reminded the meeting that the choir's cash flow was greatly improved by members paying the full amount at the beginning of the year as well as reducing the time-consuming work of logging the monthly payments.

The motion was put to the meeting that the annual subscription should be increased to £246 per annum.

Proposed by Bob Beasley and Seconded by John Stephenson

The motion was carried unanimously.

8. Appointment of an Independent Examiner

Our current Independent Examiner is Mark Hjertzen BA FCA of HW Associates Limited, an accountancy firm experienced in handling Independent Examinations for small charities. Since taking over as our IE, Mark has been very helpful, carried out the work efficiently and, most importantly, has been able to meet our tight deadlines which involve work during August. The Treasurer therefore recommended that, subject to a satisfactory quote, we should appoint HW Associates to carry out our Independent Examination for the year 2025 – 2026.

Georgie Bennet proposed that the Treasurer's recommendation should be accepted. This was seconded by Eve Bedell. Approval was unanimous.

9. Election of Officers of NHGS.

Hon. Chair: Dave Tinney

Proposed by Bob Beasley and seconded by Barry Goodman

Although there were no other nominations, the approval of the meeting was sought.

Approval was unanimous.

Hon. Secretary: Christine Goodwin

Proposed by Angela Gould and seconded by Ruth Garrod

Although there were no other nominations, the approval of the meeting was sought.

Approval was unanimous.

Hon. Treasurer: Diane Richards:

Proposed by Karen Williams and seconded by Sarah Carrick

Although there were no other nominations, the approval of the meeting was sought.

Approval was unanimous.

Election of members to serve on the Committee from 25 September 2025

The following Members were elected to serve on the Committee:

Anne Blackman, Susan Clark, Deborah Dean, Jane Kirk, Katharine Rowe, Phil Rowe

Proposed by Jenny Back and seconded by Karen Nurse.

Although all were standing unopposed, the approval of the meeting was sought.

Approval was unanimous.

10. Any other business

None

The meeting closed at 8 pm

Signed (Chair)

Date.....

North Herts Guild of Singers

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 July 2025

2023/24	2024/25
25,121 Members' Subscriptions	28,518
3,585 Gift Aid recoverable - for this year	4,168
28,706	<i>Sub-total</i> 32,686
492 Fund-raising activities (Note 1)	422
10,036 Concert income (Note 2)	9,400
702 Hire of music/folders to Members	1,728
416 Administration and Other Income (Note 3)	70
1,086 Choral Workshop (Note 4)	1,283
1,113 Grants, legacies and donations (Note 5)	2,659
1,016 Bank Interest	996
43,567 Total incoming resources	49,244
RESOURCES EXPENDED	
0 Costs of fundraising (Note 1)	0
22,870 Concert costs (Note 2)	21,782
14,873 Rehearsal costs	14,873
711 Music & folders hired/purchased	2,094
4,366 Administration and Other Expenses (Note 3)	4,493
687 Choral Workshop (Note 4)	718
94 Bank Charges	82
43,601	44,042
(34) Surplus/Deficit of resources expended	5,202

Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2025

Fixed assets	
5,700 Staging (Note 6)	4,275
Current assets	
447 Debtors and other payments in advance	868
97 Cash in hand	97
47,525 Bank Deposit Account balance	53,821
102 Bank Current Account balance	109
53,871	59,170
Less: Current liabilities	
0 Creditors and accrued expenses	97
53,871 Net current assets and net assets	59,073
Financed by:	
53,665 General reserves at 1 August 2024	53,631
(34) Surplus /Deficit of resources expended in the year	5,202
53,631 General reserves at 31 July 2025	58,833
240 Tour Reserve (Note 7)	240
53,871 Total reserves at 31 July 2025	59,073

David Tinney (Chair)

Diane Richards (Treasurer)

North Herts Guild Of Singers

Notes to the Accounts 2024/45 - Page 1

Note 1: Fund raising activities

	£	£	£	£
	Income	Costs	Net	23/24
Sale of Music	12	0	12	80
Easyfundraising	184	0	184	146
Pencil sale	40	0	40	0
Competitions (Xmas Jumper)	89	0	89	0
Advertising	0	0	0	60
Other (cake sale)	97	0	97	206
TOTALS	422	0	422	492

Note 2: Concerts

	Income	Costs	Net	23/24
Autumn (2024)	2,587	8,902	(6,315)	(4,560)
Christmas (2024)	1,847	1,280	567	(640)
Spring (2025)	2,561	9,934	(7,373)	(5,835)
Summer (2025)	2,405	1,666	739	(1,799)
TOTALS	9,400	21,782	(12,382)	(12,834)

Note 3: Admin & Other Expenses

	Income	Costs	Net	23/24
Making Music Subscription	0	411	(411)	(392)
Insurance	0	155	(155)	(151)
Performing Rights fees	0	377	(377)	(236)
Website maintenance and operation	0	124	(124)	(103)
Equipment	0	41	(41)	(13)
Concert scarves	70	0	70	(188)
Staging storage rental	0	1,128	(1,128)	(1,028)
Staging Depreciation	0	1,425	(1,425)	(1,425)
Social Events- Pimms on Lawn	0	0	0	(1)
General Administration expenses	0	832	(832)	(413)
TOTALS	70	4,493	(4,423)	(3,950)

Note 4 Workshop/Come and Sing

	Income	Costs	Net	23/24
Venue	0	185	(185)	(185)
Professionals	0	505	(505)	(490)
Entry charges for participants	1,223	0	1,223	947
Tickets	0	0	0	(3)
Refreshments	60	0	60	130
Music hire	0	28	(28)	0
TOTALS	1,283	718	565	399

Note 5 Grants, legacies and other donations

	Income	Costs	Net	23/24
JBT grant for Bach concert soloists	0	0	0	330
Williams CMT grant for Mozart concert	2,000	0	2,000	500
Herts CC locality budget music subsidy	400	0	400	250
General donations	259	0	259	33
TOTALS	2,659	0	2,659	1,113

North Herts Guild Of Singers

Notes to the Accounts 2024/25 - Page 2

Note 6: Fixed Assets (Staging)

	Cost	Depre'cn 10% strt line	Net Book Value
Balance @ 1 August 2024	14,250	8,500	5,700
Charge for the year 24/25		1,425	(1,425)
Additions	0	0	0
Less disposals	0	0	0
TOTALS	14,250	9,975	4,275

Note 7: Tour

Tour reserve	Income	Costs	Net	23/24
Balance brought forward @1 August 2024	240	0	240	240
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	
Balance brought forward @ 31 July 25	240	0	240	240

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of the North Herts Guild of Singers

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the North Herts Guild of Singers (the Trust) for the year ended 31st July 2025.

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 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; or
3. The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

Mark Hjertzen BA FCA
HW Associates Limited
Portmill House
Portmill Lane
Hitchin
Herts
SG5 1DJ

Dated 3rd October 2025

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE GUILD OF SINGERS

England & Wales - Charity number 299626

Accounts



North Herts Guild of Singers
(FINAL) Minutes of the 52nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held on Thursday 26 September 2024 at 7.30 at Benslow
Music Trust

1. Apologies:

Evelyn Marsh, Carol Lacey, Jenny Squires, Sarah Martinelli, Rosemary Wilson, Ed Twomey, Anne Blackman, Chris Blackman, Marcia Taylor, Sue Rowley Jones, Janet Coldstream, Margaret Wallace, Pam Hunter, Angela Fielding, Marcus Vere, Ella-Kate Whitehead, Catherine Biller, Diane Biller, Daphne Warren, Angela Walter, Gwen Pidgeon, Astrid Browne, Greg Gould, David Box, Peter Williams, Andrew Cowley, Malcolm Lucas, Phil Rowe, Jill Butler, Ann Foxwell, Frances Chamberlain

Number in attendance: 71 members

2. Minutes of the 51st AGM held on Thursday 28
September 2023.

The minutes were unanimously approved and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising

None arising.

4. Vice Chair's Report

Thankfully, this year has been a more normal year in terms of the choir's activities and production of high-quality concerts for the local area. There were four concerts and a workshop, with the first concert being held on 25th November 2023 at St Mary's Hitchin. The Beaufoy Sinfonia accompanied the choir in a performance of Mendelsohn's oratorio Elijah with five excellent soloists. Herts Young Carers provided the refreshments, raising £333 for their funds. The next concert featured the music of Janáček's Otče Náš with traditional carols on the 16th December at Walsworth Road Baptist Church, yet again to the accompaniment of the Garden House Hospice Christmas Tractor procession. I missed this concert as I was in the Lister hospital where I heard choir members singing

on the wards on Christmas Eve! On 10th February 2024 another very successful workshop was held at Christchurch when Bach's B Minor Mass was revisited as part of the preparations for its forthcoming performance. The workshop was attended by 83 including 19 members of other choirs. A cake and a music sale raised £270 for the choir's funds. At St Mary's Hitchin, on 23rd March 2024, Musica Donum Dei accompanied the long-awaited performance of Bach's B minor Mass to a very full audience. This performance was four years late as it was due to be sung in March 2020 until the pandemic lockdown caused its cancellation. Although its length had been reduced with an early start at 7pm, it was still a long and tiring sing and thoroughly appreciated. Thanks to Katharine Rowe of our committee who organised the refreshments, raising £241 for the choir. The year ended with a performance of Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle with four soloists at Walsworth Road Baptist Church on 13th July 2024, where a very full church was treated to a not particularly small or solemn mass! This concert will be remembered by some of us for the saga of getting the harmonium there!

This year's social event of Pimms on the Lawn took place after the rehearsal on 20th June 2024. Luckily, the weather behaved this year and about 70 members enjoyed a pleasant warm evening.

Fortunately, the vacant post on the Committee of Librarian was filled early in the year with Susan Clark and Ed Twomey taking the work on as a job share. This is not an easy role but they have successfully transitioned into it so thanks to them for their hard work. But as usual we are always happy to see new faces on the committee.

Current membership is about 120 and we have had a number of new members this year. However, we could take more so please keep spreading the word. More members help to improve the choir's finances!

On a personal note, the year did not turn out the way I expected. Following my participation in a local amateur dramatics production in late November, I went into hospital and had hoped to be back at choir in the New Year. However, recovery from the operation

meant I was not back to rehearsals until the summer term. Although I was eventually able to take part in the Committee meetings held by Zoom, I am very grateful to the committee members, especially Chris Goodwin, Secretary, and Diane Richards, Treasurer, and everyone else involved in the weekly running of the choir and concert preparations in my absence and throughout the year.

We are grateful for the continued work of our two excellent professionals, Harry and Colin, and bringing their love of music to the choir. How time flies as Harry celebrated five years as Musical Director of the choir at the beginning of the summer term.

Let's hope we have another successful season as the North Herts Guild of Singers moves into its 57th year.

Dave Tinney (Vice Chair NHGS)

5. Music Director's report.

First of all, I'd like to thank everybody for another excellent choir year. I thoroughly enjoyed last season and thought there were some excellent concerts given.

We began the season with Mendelssohn's epic oratorio Elijah, one of the great staples of the oratorio choir repertoire. A piece of great magnitude and great musical moments, the musical fire descended from heaven to St Mary's church Hitchin for a spirited display alongside the epic Johannes Moore, our Elijah, soloists Sophie Benfield, Maya Colwell and Philippe Durrant and the Beaufoy Sinfonia.

Christmas saw us join forces with the then Royal Harpist, the wonderful Alis Huws who charmed us with a variety of solo pieces and joined us for Janacek's unjustly neglected Otče Náš. Apparently, our Czech language was very good in this concert - obviously I couldn't tell you either way but it proves that good work was done. The usual fare of Christmas carols accompanied by the dulcet tones of the tractors made sure that Christmas came in the most traditional of Guild ways.

March saw us summoning up old demons as we took on Bach's B Minor Mass having had our exploits so rudely interrupted in 2020. Some would say that programming Elijah and the B Minor mass within 4 months of each other is completely crazy, and I, of course, agree with them, and yet the choir approached it with a verve and commitment one only sees with unfinished business. There was so much hard work put in over the weeks but it was so worth it for a fabulous performance in St Mary's Church alongside the incredible Musica Donum Dei, soloists Emilia Bertolini, Hera Protopapas, Simon Carter and Daniel Vening. The rousing sound of the final Dona Nobis will live long in the memory. Demons of 2020 put to bed - bravo all.

Summer saw us tackling Rossini's attempt at the least serious serious mass going. The writing of Petite Messe Solennelle at points had this MD flabbergasted and lost for words at its frivolity but the choir got into the spirit of the piece with ease and after some gruelling sessions on those two pesky fugues gave a thrilling performance at WRBC. Accompanied by Colin on piano, more on him later, George Inscoe on the world's most difficult instrument to source and courier (the harmonium) and soloists Daisy Livesey, Louise Wood, Matt Sotillo Cooke and James Bartlett the evening was a bombastic bonkers success. The smiles of everyone afterwards showed me that a good time was very much had by all and thus recognising, certainly in my view, Mr Rossini's intention.

A couple of thank yous. Firstly to Colin, our totally exceptional accompanist, organist, continuo player, transposer, tenor and everything in between. This is your annual reminder that we are so lucky to have a musician of his quality working alongside us week after week and I am always so grateful for his wise counsel (and termly curries).

To our tireless committee, Dave, Diane, Chris, Jenny, our Concert Manager, Librarians, Section Leaders, publicity team and everyone that takes jobs for the Guild - firstly thank you for putting up with me and secondly thank you for everything that you do to make sure that the cogs in this wonderful musical machine keep oiled and turning as they should. I always count

myself very lucky to be supported so ably by a wonderful team around me that allow me to focus on making the best music possible with you all.

Another fantastic season everyone and looking forward to the next.

Harry Bradford (MD NHGS)

6. Treasurer's report for the year 2023-2024

The Treasurer presented her report, as follows, together with the financial statement for the year. Before doing so, Diane took the opportunity to thank those people responsible for securing additional income during the year from grants and fundraising: Deborah Dean for obtaining grants from the Williams Church Music Trust towards the Bach concert and the Herts CC Locality Budget for a contribution towards the new lighting; Harry Bradford for a grant from the Josephine Baker Trust for the soloists for the Bach concert; Katharine Rowe and her family for organising the refreshments at the Bach concert and Sue and Greg Covington for organising a cake sale at the February workshop and at Christchurch the following morning. Both of these events, together with the grants, raised c £1200 for the choir. In addition, Diane also thanked Rita and Dave Beasley for all their work and time selling concert tickets and the Front of House work at the concerts.

I attach the NHGS accounts for the year 2023-24 which are presented in the format expected by the Charity Commission

Thanks to the continued financial support of the Members and the hard work of our professionals we were able to hold four concerts, (two with a small orchestra), and a workshop this year. Unfortunately, a loss of £640 was incurred at the Christmas concert due to the lack of parking in the town centre during the tractor parade. This contributed significantly to the overall annual deficit of £34.

The key differences in income and expenditure between the financial year 2023-24 and the previous year are:

1. **Grants:** This year we have received an additional £250 in grants from the Herts County Council's Locality Budget Scheme towards the cost of new stage lights purchased in July 2023, £500 from the Williams Church Music Trust towards the cost of the orchestra at the Spring concert and £320 from the Josephine Baker Trust to subsidise the cost of two young soloists at the Spring concert. These are shown in Note 5: Grants, legacies and general donations. My thanks go to Deborah Dean, former Chair and Harry Bradford, Music Director for obtaining these grants.
2. **Concert** income has increased by 6% to £10,036, but costs rose this year by 17% to £22,870
3. **Accruals** -Debtors and payments in advance consist of £275 venue deposits for concerts in future years, £50 search fees for 2024/5 music and £121.50 Summer concert ticket income from Hitchin Festival.
4. The total **reserves** has decreased to £53,871. These are made up of three components, namely the unrestricted (free) reserves of £45,081, the tour reserve of £240, and £8550 set aside to cover the cost of depreciation of our staging. The readily available (cash) reserve is currently £47,724

Thanks to the generous support from Members and cost savings made by the Committee and the Music Director we are fortunate to be in a financially good position at the moment. However, we still have approximately 25 fewer members than before the start of the pandemic. This loss in revenue equates to nearly the budget for one orchestra. Our costs have started to rise this year, some above inflation and we are expecting that this will continue during 2024-5. Membership fees and ticket sales do not cover the entire cost of the music programmes planned for future years and we rely heavily on fundraising, grants and recently, bank interest to meet the shortfall. In addition we need to plan finances so that within 4 years we will have the resources to renew our staging whenever this becomes necessary. (See updated reserves policy). Thank you to our extremely talented professionals and to all Members, friends and relatives who have continued to support the Guild. You can be assured that the Trustees will endeavour to manage

the finances as best we can to ensure the long-term future of the Guild.

Diane Richards (Treasurer NHGS)

Bob Beasley proposed that the financial report should be accepted, and this was seconded by Deborah Dean. All were in favour.

7. Annual subscription for the 2024-2025 season

The Committee proposed that the subscription should be increased by £24 to £234 per annum.

Prior to the meeting, notice of the proposed increase had been circulated to members. It was noted that current membership levels (currently c 20-25 members fewer than pre-pandemic levels) and concert attendance do not generate enough income to cover the proposed programme and rehearsals for 2024 - 25.

There was some discussion concerning whether the level of the subscription would be responsible for people not joining or leaving the choir. As far as we know, people leave the choir for many reasons, none of them financial, and, of those who come to explore joining the choir, the reason for not applying is invariably the standard of singing required. The main methods of attracting new members have been via concert attendance, workshops, our website and word of mouth. Recruitment may be an area for the Committee to consider in the coming year.

In response to a question from the meeting, the Treasurer explained that, because of the number of people paying monthly, cash flow in the Spring term could be problematic and that, if possible, payment in full at the beginning of each season would be preferred.

There was also a query from the floor as to whether the increase to the subscription should be higher than the rate proposed. However, the Treasurer felt that the rate proposed was sufficient at this time.

The motion was put to the meeting that the annual subscription should be increased to £234 per annum.

Proposed by Sue Trost and Seconded by Marion Bradbury.

The motion was carried unanimously.

8. Appointment of an Independent Examiner

Our current Independent Examiner is Mark Hjertzen BA FCA of HW Associates Limited, an accountancy firm experienced in handling Independent Examinations for small charities. Since taking over as our IE, Mark has been very helpful, carried out the work efficiently and, most importantly, has been able to meet our tight deadlines which involve work during August. The Treasurer therefore recommended that, subject to a satisfactory quote, we should appoint HW Associates to carry out our Independent Examination for the year 2024 - 2025.

Georgie Bennet proposed that the Treasurer's recommendation should be accepted. This was seconded by Ruth Garrod. Approval was unanimous.

9. Election of Officers of NHGS.

Hon. Chair: Dave Tinney

Proposed by Peter Todd and seconded by Barry Goodman
Although there were no other nominations, the approval of the meeting was sought. Approval was unanimous.

Hon. Secretary: Christine Goodwin

Proposed by Liz Sillars and seconded by Ruth Garrod
Although there were no other nominations, the approval of the meeting was sought. Approval was unanimous.

Hon. Treasurer: Diane Richards:

Proposed by Grace Gillions and seconded by Sue Covington
Although there were no other nominations, the approval of the meeting was sought. Approval was unanimous.

**Election of members to serve on the Committee from
26 September 2024**

The following Members were elected to serve on the Committee:

Anne Blackman, Susan Clark, Deborah Dean, Jane Kirk, Pat Salmon, Jenny Squires, Katharine Rowe,

Proposed by Eve Bedell and seconded by Ros Thick.

Although all were standing unopposed, the approval of the meeting was sought. Approval was unanimous.

10. Any other business

None

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm

Signed (Chair)

Date.....

North Herts Guild of Singers

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 July 2024

2022/23 (£)	2023/24 (£)
23,724 Members' Subscriptions	25,121
3,209 Gift Aid recoverable - for this year	3,585
26,933	<i>Sub-total</i> 28,706
378 Fund-raising activities (Note 1)	492
9,440 Concert income (Note 2)	10,036
1,803 Hire of music/folders to Members	702
364 Administration and Other Income (Note 3)	416
928 Choral Workshop (Note 4)	1,086
3,287 Grants, legacies and donations (Note 5)	1,113
462 Bank Interest	1,016
43,595 Total incoming resources	43,567
RESOURCES EXPENDED	
0 Costs of fundraising (Note 1)	0
19,540 Concert costs (Note 2)	22,870
13,974 Rehearsal costs	14,873
2,066 Music & folders hired/purchased	711
4,571 Administration and Other Expenses (Note 3)	4,366
538 Choral Workshop (Note 4)	687
93 Bank Charges	94
40,782	43,601
2,813 Surplus/Deficit of resources expended	(34)

Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2024

Fixed assets	
7,125 Staging (Note 6)	5,700
Current assets	
4,720 Refunds for cancelled 2023 Tour	0
275 Debtors and other payments in advance	447
97 Cash in hand	97
46,369 Bank Deposit Account balance	47,525
99 Bank Current Account balance	102
58,685	53,871
Less: Current liabilities	
4,720 2023 Tour deposits received in advance (Note7)	0
60 Creditors and accrued expenses	0
53,905 Net current assets and net assets	53,871
Financed by:	
50,852 General reserves at 1 August 2023	53,665
2,813 Surplus /Deficit of resources expended in the year	(34)
53,665 General reserve at 31 July 2024	53,631
240 Tour Reserve (Note 7)	240
53,905 Total reserves at 31 July 2024	53,871

David Tinney (Vice Chair)

Diane Richards (Treasurer)

North Herts Guild Of Singers

Notes to the Accounts 2023/24 - Page 1

Note 1: Fund raising activities

	£	£	£	£
	Income	Costs	Net	22/23
Sale of Music	80	0	80	111
Easyfundraising	146	0	146	112
Amazon Smile	0	0	0	70
Advertising	60	0	60	60
Other	206	0	206	25
TOTALS	492	0	492	378

Note 2: Concerts

	Income	Costs	Net	22/23
Prior year concerts -2022/3	0	0	0	40
Autumn (2023)	3,028	7,588	(4,560)	(4,603)
Christmas (2023)	1,538	2,178	(640)	87
Spring (2024)	3,175	9,010	(5,835)	(6,033)
Summer (2024)	2,295	4,094	(1,799)	409
TOTALS	10,036	22,870	(12,834)	(10,100)

Note 3: Admin & Other Expenses

	Income	Costs	Net	22/23
Making Music Subscription	0	392	(392)	(275)
Insurance	0	151	(151)	(143)
Performing Rights fees	0	236	(236)	(150)
Website maintenance and operation	0	103	(103)	(103)
Equipment	0	13	(13)	(886)
Concert scarves	50	238	(188)	81
Staging storage rental	0	1,028	(1,028)	(936)
Staging Depreciation	0	1,425	(1,425)	(1,425)
Social Events- Pimms on Lawn	366	367	(1)	0
General Administration expenses	0	413	(413)	(370)
TOTALS	416	4,366	(3,950)	(4,207)

Note 4 Workshop

	Income	Costs	Net	22/23
Venue	0	185	(185)	(85)
Professionals	0	490	(490)	(450)
Entry charges for participants	947	0	947	928
Tickets	0	3	(3)	0
Refreshments	139	9	130	0
Gifts and hospitality	0	0	0	(3)
TOTALS	1,086	687	399	390

Note 5 Grants, legacies and other donations

	Income	Costs	Net	22/23
JBT grant for Bach concert soloists	330	0	330	0
Williams CMT grant for Bach concert	500	0	500	2,000
Legacy	0	0	0	1,000
Herts CC locality budget (lighting)	250	0	250	250
General donations	33	0	33	37
TOTALS	1,113	0	1,113	3,287

North Herts Guild Of Singers

Notes to the Accounts 2023/24 - Page 2

Note 6: Fixed Assets (Staging)

	Cost	Depre'cn 10% strt line	Net Book Value
Balance @ 1 August 2023	14,250	7,125	7,125
Charge for the year 23/24		1,425	(1,425)
Additions	0	0	0
Less disposals	0	0	0
TOTALS	14,250	8,550	5,700

Note 7: Tour

Tour reserve	Income	Costs	Net	22/23
Balance brought forward @1 August 2023	240	0	240	240
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	
Balance brought forward @ 31 July 24	240	0	240	240

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of the North Herts Guild of Singers

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the North Herts Guild of Singers (the Trust) for the year ended 31st July 2024.

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 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; or
3. The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

Mark Hjertzen BA FCA
HW Associates Limited
Portmill House
Portmill Lane
Hitchin
Herts
SG5 1DJ

Dated: 26th September 2024

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE GUILD OF SINGERS

England & Wales - Charity number 299626

Accounts

**Minutes of the 51st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Held on Thursday 28 September 2023 at 7.30
at Benslow Music Trust**

1. Apologies:

Nic Garner, Sue Covington, Anne Blackman, Sue Trost, Angela Gould, Alice Goodman, Mia Matheson, Rosemary Wilson, Penny Lazenby, Chris Blackman, Sheena Atkinson, Frances Chamberlain, Jill Butler, Heather MacMillan, Tracey Plenty, Rosemary Ryden, Allyson Pascoe, Gillian Hawkins, Daphne Warren, Richard Dean, Wendy Hazelwood, Katie Thompson, Bob Beasley, Peter Williams, Andrew Wilkins

Number in attendance: 79 members (plus 2 non-members)

2. Minutes of the 50th AGM held on Thursday 29 September 2022.

The minutes were unanimously approved and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising

None arising.

4. Vice Chair's Report

After the chaos and uncertainty of the Covid years, overall, this year has been a much more successful year in terms of the choir's main aims of producing music of a high quality for the North Hertfordshire area. By Christmas 2022 Zooming of the rehearsals was stopped as only a very small handful of people were following it. This had been a very useful way of keeping people involved with the choir during the dark days of the pandemic so thank you to Harry for providing this service. Although there was no general Covid interference, other health issues and rail strikes did their best to interrupt the concert and rehearsal schedules but did not prevent the choir from performing four concerts during this season.

Our first concert of the season saw the choir performing Mozart's Requiem and Solemn Vespers with the Beaufoy Players at St Mary's on 5th November. A £2000 grant towards the costs of the orchestra was received from the Trustees of the Williams Church Music Trust and a £1000 legacy from Maureen Lewinsky helped to offset the costs of this concert. Refreshments were provided by Supported Activities who raised £320.

The Christmas concert with traditional carols and Britten's Ceremony of Carols took place on the 17th December at Walsworth Road Baptist Church to the accompaniment of the Garden House Hospice Christmas Tractor procession and snow on the ground. This was a concert affected by health issues, with Harry unable to conduct due to catching flu. Luckily Colin stepped in to conduct. The original harpist was also ill but a replacement harpist performed at the last moment. It was also at this concert that I began to feel unwell, which took me out of circulation for some weeks. I have to express my thanks to the rest of the committee who maintained the proceedings of the choir at this time.

In February a very successful workshop on Samson was held at Christchurch. The workshop was attended by 91 including 10 members of other choirs and a music sale disposed of more music than

had been donated to the choir by past members. Overall, the workshop made £390 for the choir's coffers.

Musica Donum Dei accompanied our performance of Samson at Easter in St Mary's, Hitchin to a good audience, who perhaps wondered when they might get home! Herts Welcomes Refugees provided the refreshments at this concert.

The final concert of the year, on 8th July, was a "Slice of Jazz", held again at Walsworth Road Baptist Church with accompaniment by the Harry Baker Trio. The music, some by well-known composers such as George Shearing and John Rutter, presented the choir with some new styles and rhythms, all much appreciated by an audience of more than 150 people. Refreshments were provided by WRBC, as they had done at the Christmas concert.

At the Easter concert in St Mary's, the lighting, especially for those in the back rows of the choir, was found to be poor as the Chancel lights had to be switched off as they were flickering. As it was unlikely that the church would fix the problem before our next concert at St Mary's this coming November, the committee decided to purchase some new lights and stands. A contribution of £250 towards this cost has been received from the Community budget of Keith Hoskins, a local councillor.

The year was rounded off with a social event at Benslow after the rehearsal on 22nd June. Here the weather did its best to interfere but the evening turned out to be a pleasant one with about 70 members attending for Pimms and soft drinks on the lawn.

It had been hoped to run a week-long choir tour to Normandy this September, but, unfortunately, this had to be abandoned as the required numbers to make the tour viable were not reached. Undoubtedly, another tour will be attempted as they provide members with a chance to sing in new locations and to meet socially.

Changes in the committee saw Hannah Shaw joining and leaving, Katharine Rowe joined and produced the Choir's Safeguarding Policy. Jenny Squires took on the role of Concert Manager and Penny Lazenby also joined. But as usual we are always happy to see new faces on the committee. Kate Evans, who took on the onerous task of being the Librarian, has decided to resign from the post as her work commitments and her small flat have made it difficult for her to perform the role as best as she could.

After a dip in the Covid years, membership has grown, bringing new members with, especially, a number of younger faces. Please encourage anyone you know who may be interested in singing with us as we have room for more members.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped with the running of the choir this year. A thankyou to those people who have stepped in at the last moment to help and also to those people who carry out the work that goes on behind the scenes. I am not going to list everyone as they know who they are and the tasks they carry out. However, I will mention two vital roles, the work of our Secretary Christine Goodwin and that of our Treasurer Diane Richards, and without their meticulous attention to detail and support, the running of the choir would be very difficult. I have already mentioned the grants we have received this year so a huge thankyou to Debbie Dean, our former Chair, for securing these grants and who continues to pursue external funding sources.

The last thing to say is a massive thank you to our two very talented professionals, Harry and Colin, who transmit their love of music to the choir in such an enthusiastic and enjoyable way.

I wish the choir another successful season as the North Herts Guild of Singers moves into its 56th year.

Dave Tinney (Vice Chair NHGS)

5. Music Director's report.

It's somewhat bizarre to think that last season was our first full season of music-making without any Covid scares or worries and what a season it was. We began with a real audience and choir favourite, Mozart Requiem along with his Solemn Vespers which went down a real treat. With such a well-known piece it was great to really get into the articulation and really characterise the text. We were joined by the excellent Beaufoy Sinfonia and soloists, Danni O'Neill, Mercè Bruguera Abelló, Matthew McKinney and Alex Bower-Brown who certainly aided us in a dramatic rendering. The Christmas term saw us do battle with Britten's Ceremony of Carols which required a lot of 'shower practice' to ensure that all the words of the medieval English were both correct and sung at the right time. The piece was an excellent challenge for us with its interesting harmonic language, fast rhythmic sections and long sostenuto phrases. Alas, I was attacked by the plague just before concert day but I hear that the wonderful team of Colin along with James Orford on the organ, harpist Elin Samuel and soloists Emily Beech and Maya Wheeler Colwell made it a suitably festive affair.

The new year saw us tackling one of Handel's best but tragically under-appreciated oratorios, Samson. Colin remarked – almost every one of these choruses is excellent, and he was right – we had a fantastic deep dive into baroque phrasing and articulation in the February workshop and were fired up for an extremely dramatic and rousing concert in April. We had a record number of singers and unfortunately a record length of concert (blame the MD) but I hope you'll all agree it was worth it. We were joined by the wonderful period instrumentalists of Musica Donum Dei along with James Micklethwaite as our tenor hero, Samson, Johannes Moore who played both the father figure and the brutish bad guy with aplomb, Helena Moore as Delilah and Christopher Mitchell as Micah. It was a truly triumphant evening and I will remember the final chorus 'Let their celestial concerts' with the rousing trumpet fanfares intermingled in the choral writing for many years to come.

Summer saw us go in a completely different direction – and it's a direction that I'm so pleased we took. Choral jazz, something slightly new for all the Guild Members, possibly because a certain MD never lets them relax in rehearsals, but the music by Chilcott, Shearing, Rutter and others was a fantastic way for us to kick our shoes off, feel the groove, enjoy the funky rhythms and smooth harmony. I could feel at the beginning there was a lot of 'ooh I'm not sure about this' and 'are we really going to do this' but by the concert I got the sense that we were absolutely loving this music, were able to let go and have a really fun time with it. We were joined by the inimitable Harry Baker and his trio who wowed us with their improvised licks and easy grooves – their solo pieces transporting us immediately to a smokey jazz club that we could have stayed at all night.

All in all a top season and I'm extremely proud of all the concerts and events we put on. As always I'd like to say a big thank you to our wonderful accompanist Colin – who has not only been a stalwart at the piano but has covered rehearsals and concerts this year with aplomb, we are so lucky to have him.

A thank you to Dave and our wonderful committee for all their support. They are fabulous and have to put up with me which is easier said than done – and are always one step ahead. We are so lucky to have such a committed group of individuals who do jobs for the choir on a regular basis, from putting the chairs out to giving orchestral players lifts to sourcing music stands to social media publicity – it all makes a huge difference and all these little cogs really make the NHGS machine work in the way it does. Thank you.

Lastly a thank you to you all for your continued support – it has always been an absolute joy working with the choir and I look forward to this season immensely which will bring up 5 years since my very first concert. We're doing Bach next year...what could go wrong?

Thank you

Harry Bradford (MD NHGS)

6. Treasurer's report for the year 2021-2022

The Treasurer presented her report, as follows, together with the financial statement for the year. I attach the NHGS accounts for the year 2022-23 which are presented in the format expected by the Charity Commission

Thanks to the continued financial support of the Members and the hard work of our professionals we were able to hold four successful concerts, (two with a small orchestra), and a workshop this year. A surplus of £2813 was acquired due to receiving £2,250 in grants, a £1,000 legacy and increased concert revenue. My thanks go to Deborah Dean, former Chair who obtained the grants for us.

The key differences in income and expenditure between the financial year 2022-23 and the previous year are:

1. This year we have received a £250 in grant from the Herts County Council's Locality Budget Scheme towards the cost of new stage lights, £2000 from the Williams Church Music Trust towards the cost of the orchestra at the Autumn concert and £1000 legacy from a former member, Maureen Lewinsky. These are shown in Note 5: Grants, legacies and general donations.
2. Equipment: New LED stage lights and two 4 metre stands were purchased at a total cost of £673.99, Staging consumables £103.02, plus a new advertising banner, music stand lights for orchestral players and storage boxes for music.
3. Concert income has increased to £9,440, more than double the previous year's income of £4,561.
4. Music hire income: A £247 loss was made this year due to subsidising the purchase of the Jazz Motets which could not be hired and the purchase of additional good quality second hand copies of carol books.
5. Accruals – Creditors comprising £60 of advertising income is carried forward to 2023-4. Debtors and payments in advance consist of £275 venue deposits for concerts in future years.
6. The total reserves has increased to £53,905. These are made up of three components, namely the unrestricted (free) reserves of £46,540, the tour reserve of £240, and £7125 set aside to cover the cost of depreciation of our staging. The readily available (cash) reserve is currently £46,565.

Thanks to the generous support from Members and cost savings made by the Committee and the Music Director we are fortunate to be in a financially good position at the moment. However, we still have approximately 25 fewer members than before the start of the pandemic. This loss in revenue equates to nearly the budget for one orchestra. We have been fortunate that many of our suppliers have either held their prices or increased them by less than inflation this year. We are therefore expecting costs to rise steeply during 2023-4. However, we have acquired nearly a £21k surplus over these past 4 years which will be used to subsidise orchestra costs during the next few years. Thank you to our extremely talented professionals and to all Members, friends and relatives who have continued to support the Guild. You can be assured that the Trustees will endeavour to manage the finances as best we can to ensure the long-term future of the Guild.

Diane Richards (Treasurer NHGS)

Ruth Garrod proposed that the financial report should be accepted, and this was seconded by Jenny Squires. All were in favour.

7. Annual subscription for the 2022-2023 season

The Committee proposed that the subscription should be increased by £12 to £210 per annum.

Prior to the meeting, notice of the proposed increase had been circulated to members. It was noted that the proposed increase of 6% was below the current rate of inflation.

The Treasurer explained that our current membership levels and concert attendance does not generate quite enough income to cover the cost of two orchestras for our Autumn and Spring concerts. However, we do have some reserves that can subsidise these costs if necessary.

The Treasurer suggested ways in which members could help to improve the choir's finances; encouraging friends to join the choir, publicising our concerts, selling more concert tickets, getting involved with fundraising. At this point, special thanks were given to Rita & Dave Beasley, who have done a marvellous job in selling concert tickets over many years, generating £6-7,000 per annum in cash sales.

The motion was put to the meeting that the annual subscription should be increased to £210 per annum.

Proposed by Deborah Dean and Seconded by Judy Bigley

The motion was carried unanimously.

8. Appointment of an Independent Examiner

Our current Independent Examiner is Mark Hjertzen BA FCA of HW Associates Limited, an accountancy firm experienced in handling Independent Examinations for small charities. Since taking over as our IE, Mark has been very helpful, carried out the work efficiently and, most importantly, has been able to meet our tight deadlines which involve work during August. The Treasurer therefore recommended that, subject to a satisfactory quote, we should appoint HW Associates to carry out our Independent Examination for the year 2023 – 2024.

Georgie Bennett proposed that the Treasurer's recommendation should be accepted. This was seconded by Ed Twomey. Approval was unanimous.

9. Election of Officers of NHGS.

Chair: No nominations

Hon. Secretary: Christine Goodwin

Proposed by Peter Todd and seconded by Ros Thick

Although there were no other nominations, the approval of the meeting was sought. Approval was unanimous.

Hon. Treasurer: Diane Richards:

Proposed by Ann Hunter and seconded by Ruth Garrod

Although there were no other nominations, the approval of the meeting was sought. Approval was unanimous.

Election of members to serve on the Committee from 29 September 2022

The following Members were elected to serve on the Committee:

Anne Blackman, Jane Kirk, Penny Lazenby, Pat Salmon, Jenny Squires, Katharine Rowe, Dave Tinney

Proposed by Marcus Vere and seconded by Ed Twomey.

Although all were standing unopposed, the approval of the meeting was sought. Approval was unanimous.

10. Any other business

None

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Signed (Vice Chair)

Date.....

North Herts Guild of Singers

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 July 2023

2021/22 (£)	2022/23 (£)
20,061 Members' Subscriptions	23,724
2,211 Gift Aid recoverable	3,209
22,272	<i>Sub-total</i> 26,933
453 Fund-raising activities (Note 1)	378
4,561 Concert income (Note 2)	9,440
646 Hire of music/folders to Members	1,803
133 Administration and Other Income (Note 3)	364
1,156 Choral Workshop (Note 4)	928
675 Grants, legacies and donations (Note 5)	3,287
11 Sundry Income (Bank Interest)	462
29,907 Total incoming resources	43,595
RESOURCES EXPENDED	
0 Costs of fundraising (Note 1)	0
8,273 Concert costs (Note 2)	19,540
11,766 Rehearsal costs	13,974
1,108 Music & folders hired/purchased	2,066
3,555 Administration and Other Expenses (Note 3)	4,571
1,544 Choral Workshop (Note 4)	538
44 Bank Charges	93
26,290	40,782
3,617 Surplus/(Excess) of resources expended	2,813

Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2023

Fixed assets	
8,550 Staging (Note 6)	7,125
Current assets	
0 Refunds for cancelled 2023 Tour (Note 7)	4,720
200 Debtors and other payments in advance (venue deposi	275
97 Cash in hand	97
44,557 Bank Deposit Account balance	46,369
88 Bank Current Account balance	99
53,492	58,685
Less: Current liabilities	
0 2023 Tour deposits received in advance (Note7)	4,720
0 Creditors and accrued expenses (adverts)	60
53,492 Net current assets and net assets	53,905
Financed by:	
47,235 General reserves at 1 August 2022	50,852
3,617 Surplus / (Excess) of resources expended in the year	2,813
50,852 General reserve at 31 July 2023	53,665
2,640 Tour Reserve (Note 7)	240
53,492 Total reserves at 31 July 2023	53,905

David Tinney (Vice Chair)

Diane Richards (Treasurer)

North Herts Guild Of Singers

Notes to the Accounts 2022/23 - Page 1

Note 1: Fund raising activities

	£	£	£	£
	Income	Costs	Net	21/22
Raffles	0	0	0	0
Sale of Music	111	0	111	133
Easyfundraising	112	0	112	147
Amazon Smile	70	0	70	43
Competitions	0	0	0	0
Advertising	60	0	60	90
Other	25	0	25	40
TOTALS	378	0	378	453

Note 2: Concerts

	Income	Costs	Net	21/22
Prior year concerts -2021/2	40	0	40	84
Autumn (2022)	2,623	7,226	(4,603)	(1,382)
Christmas (2022)	2,051	1,964	87	(488)
Spring (2023)	2,448	8,481	(6,033)	(1,048)
Summer (2023)	2,278	1,869	409	(878)
TOTALS	9,440	19,540	(10,100)	(3,712)

Note 3: Admin & Other Expenses

	Income	Costs	Net	21/22
Making Music Subscription	0	275	(275)	(275)
Insurance	0	143	(143)	(137)
Performing Rights fees	0	150	(150)	0
Website maintenance and operation	0	103	(103)	(103)
Equipment	0	886	(886)	(75)
Concert scarves	81	0	81	133
Staging storage rental	0	936	(936)	(936)
Staging Depreciation	0	1,425	(1,425)	(1,425)
Social Events- Pimms on Lawn	283	283	(0)	0
General Administration expenses	0	370	(370)	(604)
TOTALS	364	4,571	(4,207)	(3,422)

Note 4 Workshop February 2023

	Income	Costs	Net	21/22
Venue	0	85	(85)	(165)
Professionals	0	450	(450)	(1,100)
Entry charges for participants	928	0	928	1,156
Music hire	0	0	0	(229)
Gifts and hospitality	0	3	(3)	(50)
TOTALS	928	538	390	(388)

Note 5 Grants, legacies and other donations

	Income	Costs	Net	21/22
General Donations	37	0	37	175
Legacy	1,000	0	1,000	0
Grant - Williams MT for Mozart concert	2,000	0	2,000	0
Grant - Herts CC	250	0	250	500
TOTALS	3,287	0	3,287	675

North Herts Guild Of Singers

Notes to the Accounts 2022/23 - Page 2

Note 6: Fixed Assets (Staging)

	Cost	Depre'cn 10% strt line	Net Book Value
Balance @ 1 August 2022	14,250	5,700	8,550
Charge for the year 22/23		1,425	(1,425)
Additions	0	0	0
Less disposals	0	0	0
TOTALS	14,250	7,125	7,125

Note 7: September 2023 tour to Normandy (Cancelled)

	Income	Costs	Net	21/22
Deposits received from Members 21/22	2,400	0	2,400	5,200
Deposits received from Members 22/23	2,320	0	2,320	0
Deposits refunded to Members		4,720	(4,720)	(2,800)
TOTALS	4,720	4,720	0	2,400
Tour reserve				
Balance @1 August 2022	2,640	0	2,640	240
2023 Tour deposits passed to Tour reserve	0	0	0	2,400
2023 Tour deposits refunded to Members	0	2,400	(2,400)	
Balance@ 31 July 2023	2,640	2,400	240	2,640

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of the North Herts Guild of Singers

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the North Herts Guild of Singers (the Trust) for the year ended 31st July 2023.

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 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; or
3. The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

Mark Hjertzen BA FCA
HW Associates Limited
Portmill House
Portmill Lane
Hitchin
Herts
SG5 1DJ

Dated ...12th October 2023.....

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE GUILD OF SINGERS

England & Wales - Charity number 299626

Accounts



nhgs

North Herts Guild of Singers

**FINAL 50th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Held on Thursday 29 September 2022
at 7.30
at Benslow and via ZOOM**

PLEASE NOTE:

Since September 2021, we have been holding hybrid rehearsals with people attending in person or via Zoom. This meeting took place prior to our usual rehearsal with members attending either in person or via Zoom. In order to fulfil the requirements and keep the proceedings manageable via the hybrid platforms, the following arrangements were made:

Notice of the meeting was given via email

The agenda was circulated via email

All the relevant documents (Agenda, Minutes of last year's meeting, Treasurer's Report, Accounts, Notes on the proposal to raise the subscription) were posted in the Members' Section of the website. Members were invited to submit any questions or comments prior to the meeting.

As there were no other nominations, the meeting was asked to elect the Officers separately and the Committee *en bloc*

Attendees were asked to vote in the usual way by a show of hands. Kate Evans was appointed as teller to count the votes of those participating via Zoom. Dave Tinney was appointed to count the votes of those present.

Notice of the rate of next year's subscription will be circulated via email after the meeting. The information will be posted to members without access to email or the internet.

The Chair's Report and the MDs report will be posted on the website soon after the meeting. Paper copies will be posted to members without access to email or the internet.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1. Apologies:

Evelyn Marsh, Sarah Carrick, Marion Bradbury, Bill Pargeter, Sue Covington, Jess Peyton Jones, Phyl Corvosso, Karen Williams, Chris Blackman, Celia Lord, Mags Sykes, Peter Goff, Cecelia Mills

Number in attendance: 76 members (plus 8 non-members)

2. Minutes of the 49th AGM held on Thursday 19 September 2021.

The minutes were unanimously approved and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising

None arising.

4. Chair's Report

At the end of our Summer 2021 concert, which was online, I expressed the hope that it would be our last virtual concert. Happily, although it proved to be a huge challenge, we returned to live rehearsals in September. We succeeded in putting on 4 live concerts and a successful workshop.

In order to do this we had to complete endless risk assessments, fill in many spreadsheets, carry out surveys of the choir's views, follow all sorts of guidelines and precautions and make extra visits to venues. Lists were collated by section leaders, precise seating plans created, detailed notes were sent out and thousands of covid tests were taken. But it all proved worthwhile, and it was a wonderful moment when we were at last able to sing together, albeit a metre apart.

Our first challenge was actually finding a rehearsal venue, as Benslow could only accommodate us for a handful of dates. Our rehearsals for almost 2 terms were held at St Mary's church, which had the benefit of space and plenty of air, its flow assisted by the open doors, welcoming in the freezing night. The choir arrived in many layers. We were very grateful to the St Mary's Churchwardens for accommodating us at short notice and low cost.

Harry mastered the hybrid rehearsal. Thus we could still offer zoom, with those at home able to hear their choir. Most of us at some point found ourselves using zoom in the course of the year.

A hard working and dedicated team of members prepared the church for our rehearsals every week and I'd like to thank them.

Our AGM was held online and our new updated constitution and rules were carried unanimously. This was the culmination of 3 years' hard work and hopefully will make the choir more secure in future years.

In October our MD, Harry Bradford, took part in the Eric Ericson Award in Stockholm, reaching the final and conducting the Swedish Radio Choir. It was an astonishing performance. Many of us watched the nailbiting final, and were delighted to see Harry the runner up.

We carried out another survey of members on their views before having a live concert. After careful analysis of the results we opted for a distanced concert and an audience limited to friends and family. Our French concert in November was an absolute joy, and much appreciated by choir, audience and zoomers. At this concert we celebrated with the audience our accompanist's 10 years with the Guild.

Not only is Colin Spinks a very talented player, he is a go to for questions of music, language and pronunciation. He is able to read the mind of conductors, and is the singer's friend as we search for elusive notes. He proved a huge asset to us throughout our zooming and went to great lengths to record accompaniments for us.

By the time of our Christmas concert things on the covid front were looking a little worrying, indeed many choirs who had their concerts the following week were forced to cancel. Wearing our now customary red and black the Christmas hats were even more outrageous than usual - we all needed cheering up. The concert was described to me as 'joyous and celebratory'. Many of us found it moving, to sing together as a

choir the beautiful Normandy version of Away in a Manger which we had recorded in lockdown. Our zoomers also took part, wearing their Christmassy outfits.

Our January newsletter was titled 'Reasons to be cheerful' and most welcome.

Our March concert saw quite a few members unwell and having to drop out at the last minute. However, many joined us on zoom. It was our first concert at Walsworth Rd Baptist Church. Many of us wore yellow and blue ribbons to support the Ukraine and at the start of the concert we all stood for their National Anthem. Afterwards the concert was described to me as wonderful, uplifting, inspiring and joyous.

In April we returned to Benslow and things began to feel a little more normal. In June we held what was a real highlight of the year, our Platinum Jubilee Come and Sing. We had an amazing day, a sell out, with lots of visiting singers. I received many positive comments from both visitors and choir.

Here are some of them: *'miles ahead of any singing event I've ever done', 'wonderful', 'joyful', 'fabulous', 'a super day', 'I would have paid more' and 'My head is still buzzing! I enjoyed the day enormously - your organisation, the refreshments and friendly, welcoming atmosphere made for a very special day'.*

A lot of members worked towards this, and I thank them, as well as local councillor Keith Hoskins who to donated £500 towards it from his locality budget.

Unfortunately, by the summer concert in Ashwell many members were unwell and the number on stage was quite small. However, we must have made a pretty good sound as the enthusiastic audience had a wonderful time, one said it was fabulous and brought big smiles to everyone in the audience.

Membership: our members increased from 108 to 117 with 23 new members. Sadly, we lost some much-loved members. We remember, Maureen Lewinski, a former member of the sopranos, Gill Harwood, a second sop and long-standing member, Alan Miller, a bass who had only recently joined us, and of course Alan Biller. Alan served the choir in many ways, including as Chairman, Secretary, and Librarian, and most recently independent examiner. He was always ready to help and probably knew more about the choir than anyone. He leaves an empty space in the front row of the basses.

The committee has expanded, joined by Kate Evans, Jane Kirk, Hannah Shaw and Jenny Squires. Kate has taken over from Francis as Librarian, Hannah is doing publicity and Jenny is now our Concert Manager. We are grateful to Frances, who is remaining on the committee, and to Peter Todd who has stepped down as Concert Manager. Your committee do a splendid job.

I have to thank all those who have contributed to the running of the choir this past year, and especially our very hard-working Secretary Christine and our Treasurer Diane, who have put in many hours, and been a constant support. I'd also like to thank my husband, Richard, designer of all our posters since 2015, tenor section leader, but also unofficial assistant Chair taking on all sorts of tasks without complaint.

As you know, I am stepping down as Chair of NHGS after 4 eventful years. I have realised just how important our choir is to so many of us from all the emails and

comments received. Hopefully things are now more normal, although we still have some challenges to face. Let us look forward to our 55th season.

Deborah Dean (Chair NHGS)

5. Music Director's report.

It is wonderful to be reporting to you all this year after a complete year of in-person music making! It is crazy to think that only 12 months ago we were taking our very first, somewhat nervy steps back to singing with socially distanced rehearsals in St Mary's. It's been a long and tough road back but I am incredibly proud of how we have navigated the hurdles of covid and how optimistic the future of the choir feels as I report to you today. If Covid taught us nothing else, it's that the joy of choir and communal music making is somewhat irreplaceable and such an important and indeed essential part of our lives – it is something worth preserving and fighting for.

Our programme this time last year saw us begin with an exploration of 20th century French music with the somewhat bombastic mass setting of Louis Vierne paired with Durufle's incomparable Requiem. Despite our distance and somewhat sub-optimal rehearsal temperatures, the choir quickly brushed off any covid cobwebs and were able to really enjoy the details of both scores. The concert day was a triumph and I couldn't think of a better way to reintroduce ourselves to live audiences than with the opening of the Vierne Kyrie – it really was quite something! We were joined by the excellent Rosamond Thomas, Nina Kiva and of course the inimitable Colin Spinks. Throughout the process, thanks mostly to the work of John Chamberlain and his team, we were also able to cast our rehearsals and concerts online so that those unable to join us initially were able to share in the joy of our music making – bravo.

Having been bereft of a proper Christmas in 2020, our December concert saw us feasting in carols with the Vaughan Williams' Fantasia paired with a number of classics from the Carols for Choirs books. As an MD, there's always a love-hate relationship with Christmas music as once you are on your 1000th iteration of 'Away in a Manger' for the season it can become a bit tedious but this year felt slightly different with every single carol feeling unbelievably fresh and vivid. Despite nearly losing our excellent baritone soloist, Charlie Baigent, at the wrong end of the church and dealing with a less-than-excellent MD who left his copy in the dressing room...the choir performed extremely well and brought such exuberance to these familiar carols. This, in turn, engendered a certain gusto from the audience I have not heard in a while... Although I personally had another Christmas ruined by Covid, I slept safely in the knowledge that I'd got my Christmas music fix before everything went downhill – so thank you all for that.

Our concert in April saw us tackling the Handel Coronation Anthems, the Mozart Missa Brevis in B flat and the heroic Stanford Te Deum. Musically, I think this was one of the most satisfying concerts I have ever done with the Guild. Everyone knew exactly what they were doing, there was such attention to detail in terms of dynamics and articulation and I got the sense the choir had developed a real ownership of the music. Despite occasional worries that I might fall to an untimely death, such was the great height of my podium in Walsworth Road, I had such fun conducting the concert and the acoustics of the church were very generous to the intricate writing of the Handel in particular. This was also the first concert that we stopped socially distancing and I could feel a palpable sense of relief at being able to hear everything much more clearly. Our soloists Claire Ward, Sally Lundgren, Alex Hume, Jo Moore and guest

organist Richard Leach were all extremely complementary of the choir and I think we were very worthy of their praise.

The summer term saw us moving into a completely different territory, to the music of battles, of romance, of angry coppers and 19th century extravagance – it could only be Opera Choruses and G and S. It must be said that I would never have included G and S as ‘my music’ so to speak, as I’ve never really had the chance to ‘get into it’ but the music making over the Summer really enamoured the music to me – it was fantastic fun to approach this repertoire, sometimes not in the most sensible of ways...! That being said the music did present challenges for us – four different languages, lots of text, dramatic renderings (saying nothing of Bob Beasley’s excellent props) and much, much more. The concert in the delightful setting of Ashwell was great fun and it was lovely to see such a warm and supportive audience. The choir sang with fantastic commitment and, after much encouragement from yours truly, even began to smile as if they were enjoying the experience – imagine that, singing for enjoyment (I must be doing something wrong). Soloists, Tamsin Raitt, Hannah Bennett and Samuel Kibble wowed the crowd with their solo arias and page turner extraordinare over here was accompanied ably by Colin Spinks on the piano, despite having to temporarily apply WD40 to the waning Ashwell instrument!

In the midst of the summer term, we also donned our Red, White and Blue for a super fun Jubilee Bring and Sing which featured coronation anthems throughout the ages and Mozart’s Coronation Mass. It was great to welcome singers from all over the county to join us for the day and I’d like to think they were impressed by the music making but more importantly the level of baking which was quite simply extraordinary! Thanks to all those who made the day such a success and I look forward to running more workshops like that in the future.

Overall, it has been a wonderful year of music making with many happy memories. I’m sure this season will be remembered for years to come as the season where, like a Phoenix, the Guild was reborn from the ashes of Covid. As ever I’d like to extend my thanks to the committee and essentially to everyone who has to put up with my administration or lack thereof. Frances and Kate (library), Chris (membership), Peter (concert manager), Diane (treasurer) to name but a few but in particular I’d like to thank our wonderful chair Deborah for her constant reassurance and encouragement. I can’t really imagine what life in the Guild will be like without her constant presence as chair but I couldn’t imagine anyone better to guide me through my first 3 and half seasons with the choir. As for Colin, well what can I say – not only is he an excellent musician and colleague but he’s also one of the most resilient and good-natured people I know. This is your annual reminder that we are very lucky indeed to have him. To the choir, thank you for your constant support in all aspects of my musical life – there have been a couple of big occasions over the last year in which I’ve been very touched and indeed overwhelmed by the lovely messages and emails that I have received. It always feels like I have an extended family here and I really appreciate that! I’m already looking forward to seeing what special musical moments the coming season will bring.

Harry Bradford (MD NHGS)

6 Treasurer’s report for the year 2021-2022

The Treasurer presented her report, as follows, together with the financial statement for the year.

I attach the NHGS accounts for the year 2021-22 which are presented in the format expected by the Charity Commission

Thanks to the continued financial support of the Members and the hard work of our professionals we were able to hold in person rehearsals, four live concerts, (none with an orchestra), and a Jubilee workshop this year. A surplus of £3,617 was acquired due to obtaining some concert income, which was not in the budget due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, a £500 grant for the Jubilee workshop and significant increases in fundraising revenue and general donations

The key differences in income and expenditure between the financial year 2021-22 and the previous year are:

1. Gift Aid has decreased primarily due to a 10% decrease in the number of Members who can offer Gift Aid plus an increase in the teaching element (16 to 26%) that has to be deducted from subscriptions before making a claim. This is calculated from the previous year's figures where our overall costs were low due to the pandemic, compared to the teaching costs.. This should improve going forward.
2. A £500 grant was received from the Locality Budget Scheme of Herts County Council for the Jubilee Workshop and is shown in Note 5: Grants, legacies and general donations.
3. There were no Performing Rights Fees paid this year. These are paid one year in arrears and no in-person concerts were held during the year 2020-21
4. General Administration expenses included the course fees for our First Aiders to renew their qualifications, the renewal of a Zoom licence for Committee meetings and some rehearsals, and the honorarium paid to our Independent Examiner.
5. Bank charges, particularly for the use of cheques and cash were introduced part way through the year.
6. Accruals - Creditors comprising £90 of advertising income and £84 of unclaimed ticket income carried forward for two successive years were written off this year.; Debtors and payments in advance consist of £200 venue deposits for concerts in future years.
7. The total reserves has increased to £53,492. These are made up of three components, namely the unrestricted (free) reserves of £45,152, the tour reserve of £2,640, and £5,700 set aside to cover the cost of depreciation of our staging. The readily available (cash) reserve is currently £44,742

Thanks to generous support from Members and cost savings made by the Committee, we are fortunate to be in a financially good position at the moment. However we have approximately 25 fewer members than before the start of the pandemic and concert attendee numbers, (and hence revenue) are down by half of pre-pandemic figures. This loss in revenue equates to our former budget for orchestras of £10-12k. We intend to start to use orchestras in 2022-3 but are also expecting increased costs all round. However we have acquired nearly an £18k surplus over these past 3 years which will be used to subsidise orchestra costs during the next few years. My thanks go to our extremely talented professionals who have had to adapt to changing circumstances throughout the year and to all the Committee and many other helpers who have had to plan and execute many tasks at short notice. Thank you too, to all Members who have continued to support the Guild and you can be assured that the Trustees will endeavour to manage the finances as best we can to ensure the long term future of the Guild.

Diane Richards (Treasurer NHGS)

Peter Todd proposed that the financial report should be accepted, and this was seconded by Ruth Garrod. All were in favour.

7 Annual subscription for the 2022-2023 season

The Committee proposed that the subscription should be increased by £30 to £198 per annum.

The amount of the proposed increase was questioned from the floor. Deborah referred to the rationale that Diane had circulated prior to the meeting. She also pointed out that we were holding two concerts with an orchestra in the forthcoming season, both carrying a predicted budgeted loss (£5,380 for the November concert and £7,345 for the Spring concert). Deborah also reminded everybody that we had not raised the subscription since 2019 and that, even with the proposed increase, it worked out at less than £5 per rehearsal. With our membership down on pre-COVID numbers, all costs rising and with audience numbers slow to return to pre-pandemic levels, careful budgeting will be essential moving forward.

Another question from the floor involved the hiring out of our staging as a means of raising money. Deborah pointed out that the staging that we have requires careful assembly by people familiar with the system. It can be very easily damaged. We have recently hired out a small amount of staging as a favour to another, small choir. It required a volunteer to oversee the collection of the staging and give instruction in its use. Another volunteer had to be available to check the staging on its return and store it safely. Hiring the staging could be considered a high risk enterprise which requires a lot of volunteer time for very little financial reward.

The motion was put to the meeting that the annual subscription should be increased to £198 per annum.

Proposed by Judy Bigley and Seconded by Pat Salmon

The motion was carried unanimously.

8 Appointment of an Independent Examiner

The Treasurer had prepared a statement which, in her absence, was read by Dave Tinney.

After the sad loss of our Independent Examiner Alan Biller (who carried out the Independent Examination for a small honorarium), we were unable to find another suitably qualified volunteer to take on the role. We therefore appointed an accountancy firm who handle Independent Examinations for small charities. HW Associates in Hitchin provided us with a competitive quote and carried out the work in an efficient manner meeting our tight deadlines for completion in time for our AGM. (Other firms that were approached could not guarantee to do the work during August.) It is therefore recommended that, subject to a satisfactory quote, we should appoint HW Associates to carry out our Independent Examination for the year 2022-23.

Diane Richards (Treasurer)

Peter Williams proposed that the Treasurer's recommendation should be accepted. This was seconded by Barry Goodman. Approval was unanimous.

It was noted that, in preparing his report, the Independent Examiner was extremely complimentary about the work of our Treasurer, notably her clear record keeping and

the way in which she presented her report and the accounts for examination. We are all very grateful to Diane.

9 Election of Officers of NHGS.

Deborah is stepping down as Chair at this meeting. There have been no nominations to succeed her.

Prior to this meeting, the Secretary contacted the Charity Commission to report our situation and was assured that we would still be able to operate legally with a Vice Chair.

Chair: No nominations

Hon. Secretary: Christine Goodwin

Proposed by Ruth Garrod and seconded by Liz Sillars
Although there were no other nominations, the approval of the meeting was sought.
Approval was unanimous.

Hon. Treasurer: Diane Richards:

Proposed by Bob Beasley and seconded by Sue Trost
Although there were no other nominations, the approval of the meeting was sought.
Approval was unanimous.

10 Election of members to serve on the Committee from 29 September 2022

The following Members were elected to serve on the Committee:

Anne Blackman, Frances Chamberlain, Kate Evans, Jane Kirk, Penny Lazenby, Pat salmon, Hannah Shaw, Jenny Squires, Dave Tinney

Proposed by Judy Bigley and seconded by Richard Dean.
Although all were standing unopposed, the approval of the meeting was sought.
Approval was unanimous.

9 Any other business

No other business had been notified in advance of the meeting.
At this point, the Secretary, on behalf of everyone on the Committee and all the membership, thanked Deborah for her outstanding leadership during her tenure as Chair We have all been grateful for her encouragement and guidance as well as the amount of time and hard work she has dedicated to guiding the choir through some unprecedented times. Deborah was presented with a bottle of prosecco as a small token of our appreciation.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Signed (Chair)

Date.....

North Herts Guild of Singers

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 July 2022

2020/21 (£)	2021/22 (£)
20,251 Members' Subscriptions	20,061
2,924 Gift Aid recoverable - for this year	2,211
23,175	<i>Sub-total</i> 22,272
153 Fund-raising activities (Note 1)	453
0 Concert income (Note 2)	4,561
0 Hire of music/folders to Members	646
0 Administration and Other Income (Note 3)	133
0 Choral Workshop (Note 4)	1,156
130 Grants, legacies and donations (Note 5)	675
4 Sundry Income	11
23,462 Total incoming resources	29,907
RESOURCES EXPENDED	
0 Costs of fundraising (Note 1)	0
4,770 Concert costs (Note 2)	8,273
8,990 Rehearsal costs	11,766
0 Music & folders hired/purchased	1,108
3,077 Administration and Other Expenses (Note 3)	3,555
0 Choral Workshop (Note 4)	1,544
0 Bank Charges	44
16,837	26,290
6,625 Surplus/(Excess) of resources expended	3,617

Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2022

Fixed assets	
9,975 Staging (Note 6)	8,550
Current assets	
339 Debtors and other payments in advance (venue deposits)	200
97 Cash in hand	97
37,146 Bank Deposit Account balance	44,557
92 Bank Current Account balance	88
47,649	53,492
Less: Current liabilities	
174 Creditors and accrued expenses	0
47,475 Net current assets and net assets	53,492
Financed by:	
40,610 General reserves at 1 August 2021	47,235
6,625 Surplus / (Excess) of resources expended in the year	3,617
47,235 General reserve at 31 July 2022	50,852
240 Tour Reserve (Note 7)	2,640
47,475 Total reserves at 31 July 2022	53,492

Deborah Dean (Chair)

Diane Richards (Treasurer)

North Herts Guild Of Singers

Notes to the Accounts 2021/22 - Page 1

Note 1: Fund raising activities	£	£	£	£
	Income	Costs	Net	20/21
Sale of Music	133	0	133	8
Easyfundraising	147	0	147	83
Amazon Smile	43	0	43	62
Competitions	0	0	0	0
Advertising	90	0	90	0
Other	40	0	40	0
TOTALS	453	0	453	153

Note 2: Concerts

	Income	Costs	Net	20/21
Prior year concerts -2020	84	0	84	0
Autumn (2021)	661	2,042	(1,381)	(1,420)
Christmas (2021)	1,345	1,833	(488)	(1,500)
Spring (2022)	1,240	2,288	(1,048)	(470)
Summer (2022)	1,231	2,109	(878)	(1,380)
TOTALS	4,561	8,273	(3,712)	(4,770)

Note 3: Admin & Other Expenses

	Income	Costs	Net	20/21
Making Music Subscription	0	275	(275)	(365)
Insurance	0	137	(137)	(132)
Performing Rights fees	0	0	0	(97)
Website maintenance and operation	0	103	(103)	(103)
Equipment	0	75	(75)	0
Concert scarves	133	0	133	0
Staging storage rental	0	936	(936)	(780)
Staging Depreciation	0	1,425	(1,425)	(1,425)
Social Events	0	0	0	0
General Administration expenses	0	604	(604)	(175)
TOTALS	133	3,555	(3,422)	(3,077)

Note 4: Jubilee Workshop June 11

	Income	Costs	Net	20/21
Venue	0	165	(165)	0
Professionals	0	1,100	(1,100)	0
Entry charges for participants	1,156	0	1,156	0
Music hire	0	229	(229)	0
Gifts and hospitality	0	50	(50)	0
TOTALS	1,156	1,544	(388)	0

Note 5 Grants, legacies and other donations

	Income	Costs	Net	20/21
General Donations	175	0	0	130
Grant - Herts CC for Jubilee workshop	500	0	0	0
TOTALS	675	0	0	130

North Herts Guild Of Singers

Notes to the Accounts 2021/22 - Page 2

Note 6: Fixed Assets (Staging)

	Cost	Depre'cn 10% strt line	Net Book Value
Balance @ 1 August 2021	14,250	4,275	9,975
Charge for the year 21/22		1,425	(1,425)
Additions	0	0	0
Less disposals	0	0	0
TOTALS	14,250	5,700	8,550

Note 7: September 2022 tour to Whitby -Cancelled

	Income	Costs	Net	20/21
Deposits received from Members	5,200	0	5,200	0
Deposits refunded to Memembers		2,800	(2,800)	0
TOTALS	5,200	2,800	2,400	0
Deposits retained for 2023 Tour			2,400	
Tour reserve				
Balance @1 August 2021	240	0		240
2023 Tour deposits passed to Tour Reserve	2,400	0		
Tour reserve at 31 July 2022	2,640	0	2,640	240

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of the North Herts Guild of Singers

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the North Herts Guild of Singers (the Trust) for the year ended 31st July 2022.

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 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; or
3. The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

Mark Hjertzen BA FCA
HW Associates Limited
Portmill House
Portmill Lane
Hitchin
Herts
SG5 1DJ

Dated17 October 2022.....