



PRESIDENT'S REPORT AGM 2024

2023-2024 has been a successful and enjoyable season of music making for Ayr Choral Union. Our membership continues to grow and our number is now ninety-five. The choir has performed to a remarkably high standard on all occasions throughout the season.

Our Come and [REDACTED] *Gloria* in August was well attended by choir members and attracted a sizeable number of guests – some of whom, subsequently, decided to join the choir. It was a very enjoyable day thanks to Andy's enthusiasm and enhanced by accompanist [REDACTED] and Soprano soloist [REDACTED].

The October concert was a great success, opening with Parry's *I was glad* followed by Faure's *Requiem*, Poulenc's *Gloria* and Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*. Soloists Catriona Clark and Colin Murray were of the highest standard and Peter Shepherd played the Town Hall organ magnificently.

Our Christmas concert was a sellout, at least partly thanks to our friends of Newmilns and Galston Brass Band who played at their usual best and made this concert hugely enjoyable for participants and audience alike. Our patron [REDACTED] was in the audience and he was very complimentary about the performance. We are grateful for his continuing support.

Our main season finished in March with performances of Brahms' *Deutsches Requiem* and Tarik O'Regan's *Triptych*. Despite losing some rehearsal time in the run up to the concert, on the night the choir rallied around its conductor and made it an amazing performance. The fantastic Caledonian Consort and the two outstanding soloists [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] supported this. It was very moving to have received a written note of support from [REDACTED] prior the concert which was very poignant. The audience, again, received this concert very well.

Finally, at the end of April a large group of singers performed our "extra concert" of short pieces at Glasgow Cathedral. This is becoming a welcome tradition for many. With four evenings' rehearsal time the choir sang a great concert of old favourites, supported by Andrew Forbes on piano and organ. The audience was very appreciative. This also showed in the significant amount of money donated at the end of the concert. The informal social gathering after the concert made it a wonderful day out for all involved.

Groups of the choir have been active in between the above mentioned "main events":

On 21st June, several members sang for Making Music Day at Belleisle Conservatory. Thanks are due to [REDACTED] for conducting and [REDACTED] for the overall organisation.

The Christmas season began on 2nd December with Carol singing at Belleisle Conservatory – thanks again to [REDACTED] for conducting. This was followed by a venture into pastures new on 10th December when we were invited to offer the musical frame to "Christmas at Culzean Castle". This was an opportunity to reach a new audience but, unfortunately, was somewhat hampered by the horrible weather that day. A sincere thank you to all involved in the organisation of this event and those who gave support on the day namely [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

After Peter Sheperd's departure as our accompanist, we had several people helping at rehearsals. [REDACTED] was appointed on a temporary contract in January. She is clearly an accomplished pianist. However, over time it was felt by Andy as well as numerous choir members that her strength did not



lie in the specific challenges of an accompanist so, after discussion, the Committee and Ning mutually agreed not to extend her contract beyond this season. At the present time [REDACTED] has been in contact with Kentaro, Hebba, and [REDACTED] to offer their services for the coming season. Stability of provision of accompanist services will be discussed with high priority in the committee later this month.

In December we auditioned and appointed [REDACTED] as our new assistant conductor. Under [REDACTED], he is making great progress with his conducting skills. This clearly showed in his participation in the Cathedral concert.

Plans for our next season are firmly in place with our "War – Peace – Hope" concert cycle. This will start with MacMillan's *All the Hills and Vales Along* and Jenkins' *The Armed Man* in October when we will be joined by Newmilns and Galston Brass Band, who will also support us in our Christmas concert. The programme for our spring concert will be Handel's *Utrecht Te Deum* and [REDACTED]

The start of the new season will be an open rehearsal on 20th August, at the usual time in Castlehill Church. Please encourage any interested singers you know to come along for the evening to get a flavour of Ayr Choral singing.

Preparations for the Ayr Choral Sesquicentennial in the 2026/27 season have started. A wealth of suggestions has been made in the members' survey and a small working group has begun work on several proposals which will be developed and shared with the choir in due course.

At the AGM, a cheque will be presented to our chosen charity partner The Ayrshire Hospice. The bucket collections at our concerts raised £1,036.86. Thank you to all donors and to Yvonne Lui for being the choir's liaison with the Hospice fund- raising team. This partnership is now ending and a new charity partner will be decided at the AGM.

Ayr Choral could not function without the efforts of the Committee and the many volunteers who make things work smoothly and efficiently. There are too many to mention all but a few need to be named:

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] lead our Publicity and Marketing Team, with [REDACTED] in charge of the website. They do a wonderful job ensuring that all our events are well attended, with the ticket sales for our three big concerts being superb. They, together with [REDACTED], make sure that the choir has a high profile on social media. A huge thank you to them for all their hard work, time and effort. It is much appreciated. [REDACTED] is also our Making Music Representative and regularly attends its online events and keeps up to date with new initiatives.

Thank you to [REDACTED], our efficient Concert Administrator, who books guest artists and liaises with Ayr Town Hall staff to ensure our concerts run smoothly; to the Music Committee for planning our successful and popular repertoire; to [REDACTED] who is always on time to open up the church for rehearsals; to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who organise and provide refreshments for our concert artistes. Thank you too, to [REDACTED] and her team of great bakers and brewers-the ladies who make our fortnightly tea breaks so popular. These tea breaks are much appreciated and help to raise funds for the choir. [REDACTED] also organises the Guides who are very efficient programme sellers at our concerts. The 100 Club is now re-established, so thanks go to Sue Gregson for the organisation and administration of this important fundraiser for the choir.



██████████ maintains his crucial role as Friends of Ayr Choral administrator. He continues to seek out and encourage both members and friends and family to support the choir. Many thanks to him in his endeavours.

Three key members of the committee are retiring from their posts at the end of this season:

Our Interim Treasurer ██████████ has done an outstanding job looking after our finances for the past four years, keeping a close eye on financial sustainability and external funding opportunities and making extremely valuable contributions to committee meetings. He has also overseen ticket sales for our concerts and is a general source of great support and inspiration. As an organisation we owe him a great debt of gratitude.

Next on the list is ██████████ who has been the mildest mannered and efficient librarian we could ever wish for – for the past eight years! The amount of flawless organisation and sorting of music Andrew has done during those years is hard to comprehend. All I can say is a deeply felt grateful “Thank you.”

Finally, ██████████. The work she has done during four years as President, guiding the choir through the unprecedented challenges of the Covid pandemic, cannot be summed up easily nor overestimated. Her deep insight into all the workings of the choir, her diligence and direct involvement in so many aspects of the running of the organisation is second to none. Her support and encouragement as Vice President throughout the last year leaves me humbled and forever grateful. ██████████ – you will be sorely missed!

Last year the outgoing president wrote:

“██████████ is a simply outstanding Secretary. Nothing is too much trouble and she is always willing to take on extra tasks. Since we returned after lockdown, ██████████ has been in charge of the register, of ticket sales and programme editing as well as her routine secretarial tasks... I could not have functioned as President without ██████████ by my side and I am so grateful to her for all her help, editing skills and sensible advice.” I could not put it any better, so I am not going to try. The amount and quality of work ██████████ does behind the scenes is simply amazing. Her knowledge and wisdom helped me on countless occasions during the very steep learning curve of my first year as President. I am extremely grateful for her ongoing support.

And last, but not least: ██████████. What can I say that hasn't been said. With unwavering enthusiasm and energy, he has raised the profile of our choir to an unprecedented level of musical accomplishment. His musicality is contagious. His humour makes rehearsals joyful. He works very hard behind the scenes designing programmes and finding amazing musicians for our concerts. He takes an interest in the choir that goes beyond the remit of a musical director. I am just delighted and grateful to have him as our musical director and I am very much looking forward to another great musical season 2024 – 2025.

██████████

June 2024



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██████████
June 2024

Ayr Choral financial Statement 24 -25

	24-25	23-24
Income		
Donations and Gift Aid	3002.25	2578.00
Easy fundraising	67.38	750.00
Teas & scarves	383.00	
100 club	500.00	
Leaving gifts	310.00	
Miscellaneous		30.00
Membership subscriptions	14376.06	12485.00
Cathedral subs	595.00	
Concert / come & sing	18578.92	17904.00
Friends	755.00	750.00
Programme adverts	350.00	
Music hired	25.00	
Refund re Town Hall	70.00	
Total	39012.61	34497.00
Expenditure		
Musical Director	5785.00	7495.00
Accompanist	3820.00	4220.00
Assistant conductor	2150.00	600.00
Soloists & augmentors	1125.00	3250.00
Orchestra	3200.00	6250.00
Music costs	2379.83	1847.00
Venues	4362.00	5009.00
Administration	636.29	1314.00
Accountant	420.00	
Making Music	1649.96	921.00
Website and Publicity	457.98	743.00
Printing	706.44	
Leaving gift	310.00	584.00
Ticket / sub refunds	178.00	134.00
Total Expenditure	27180.50	32367.00
Surplus for the period	11832.11	1710.00
*Bank balance from 24 April 2024		31275.12
Bank Balance 31 March 2025	43107.23	

*Some receipts and payments after the Financial Year end date of 31 March 2024 were included in the previous Financial statement. The March 2025 concert transactions outwith the Financial Year end will appear in the 2025 -2026 statement.

The accounts were approved by the Trutees and signed on its behalf by:

Axel Winkler, President

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

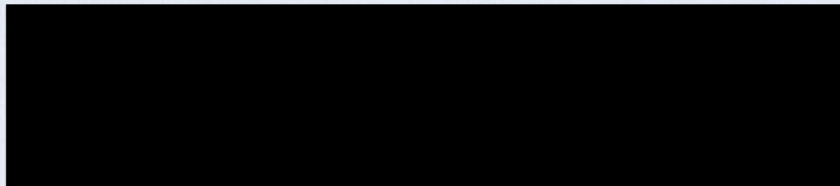
1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and

to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have not been met, or

2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached



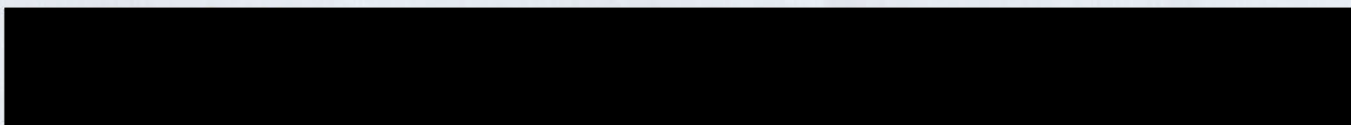
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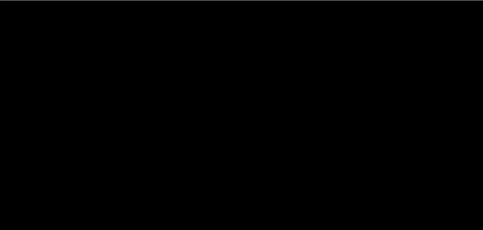
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AIB (SCOT)