

YAMSEN AGM reports March 2024 to Feb 2025

Chair's report

Throughout this past year we have been able to maintain our usual activities, which are as enjoyable and popular as ever. Our annual Christmas concert was held again this year at Pudsey Civic Hall while the Town Hall remains closed. At the same venue we held the brilliant multi-sensory days. At the time of last year's report we were worried about the council's reported decision to sell the Hall in Pudsey as a part of its cost-saving plans. In my last report I said "We will have to make plans once the council's final decision and timetable is announced" and for now their decision seems to be to defer a final decision, with no date announced for a definitive decision. What that means is that, at least for now, we can continue to rely on the use of this most valuable resource. An exciting plan for the next year involves investing in some modifications at our Meanwood location that will give us some space for workshops and in particular we hope to deploy the gamelan once the work is completed.

The charity's finances remain stable in difficult times – thanks as usual to the generosity of individual and group donors. Financial times are hard and we appreciate greatly the support we receive. This includes that from Arts Council England which was formerly managed by LMEP (Leeds Music Education Partnership) and held by Leeds City Council and is now available to us because we are fortunate, due to our regional remit, to be partners in the new West Yorkshire Music Hub. Funding this year was reduced and not able quite to match what we requested but nonetheless remains a major financial contribution and support for our work. One marker of the changing financial landscape is that this year we were challenged for the first time to produce a formal policy on the reserves we hold, written in the context of a wider finance policy. Reserves are especially important when sources of income are precarious and it has been a useful exercise.

A development during the year is that we have found the funding to pay for administration time to support the completion of those numerous tasks that are so necessary but tend to get squeezed out when delivery of activities fills the time. So welcome to Hannah and thanks for the work you are doing. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Barbra Barnes, who has offered us important support as membership secretary and has decided to stand down this year; her role has been taken by Hannah.

Some congratulations. First of course to Mavis West, founder and stalwart of Yamsen, who was awarded an MBE in the King's New Year's Honours for services to adults and children with additional needs through the provision of music. A tribute first to Mavis, and to the organisation she has done so much to nourish over the years. Diane Paterson completed her studies and obtained a PGCert with Sounds of Intent, exploring ways to use music with people with autism.

In terms of the governance of the charity, we are this year seeking the AGM's approval to make some minor changes to the constitution, which has not changed for decades and just needs some minor modification to reflect our current functioning. There have been no major changes to the membership of the trustees since last year. We have made the decision to seek one or two new appointments - to broaden our repertoire and to ensure we can maintain momentum as we develop. As usual we will need to review membership of the committee, and its officers, during this meeting.

It remains only for me to thank everybody who puts so much effort into making supporting YAMSEN so enjoyable and worthwhile – volunteers, members, music leaders and teachers and of course our officers including our secretary and treasurer whose behind the scenes work keeps the show on the road.

YAMSEN Adult Music (YAM) Report

YAM Singers choir and YAM workshops have enjoyed another full year of activities, including giving and hosting concerts, playing instruments, composing, dancing, celebrating holidays and bringing in new guest leaders.

YAM, or YAMSEN Adult Music, runs a choir fortnightly alternating with music workshops on term-time Friday mornings at the West Park United Reformed Church. YAM is one of the few places that adults with learning disabilities can meet up regularly in a big group, so this social element, as well as the music itself, continues to be very important to our members. We welcome around 50-60 members to each session and have added a few new members since last year.

We are thankful for our YAM members and exceptional volunteers for making our weekly Friday morning choir and workshops a wonderfully friendly place to be.

We had a number of performances and community engagements throughout the year. In March 2024 we participated in the Rothwell Music Festival, gave an open house concert in May, sang in concert with the Accord choir in July at Ilkley and again in December at the Christmas concert at Pudsey. We were honoured to perform twice at St Matthew's church this year— first for a memorial service in September and again in December in the church's Christmas tree festival.

In June and July, we asked members and volunteers for suggestions for songs and workshops for the coming year. Thanks to their feedback, we have had enjoyable workshops from new guest leaders Martyn Roper and Topaz Jazz group. We also saw members develop their confidence, take solo spots in new choir songs and perform in YAM's Got Talent. The standard of singing improves year on year!

We are very proud of Mavis West - a founder of YAMSEN and YAM, who has received an MBE for services to people with learning disabilities and music, for her commitment to YAMSEN and improving our members' lives with music over more than 40 years. YAMSEN has also been nominated for the King's Award for

Voluntary Services, and YAM received a monitoring visit from its assessors in February.

YAM is grateful to Aspire, which supplies core funding for our activities. We are active on the Aspire Friendship group on Facebook and make contributions to the Aspire Newsletter.

We warmly invite YAMSEN members to join YAM Singers at our next open house concert at West Park United Reformed Church, Spenn Lane, on 16th May 10:30-12.

Joanna Winster Mavis West Sue Siddall

YAMSEN Christmas Concert

This year's concert was held at Pudsey Civic Hall on Thursday December 13th 2025. This was the 41st annual YAMSEN Christmas concert. Both the Accord choir and YAM Singers performed carols, accompanied by Off the Cuff band and special musician guests, and MC'd by Diane Paterson. The audience joined us singing communal carols, having a dance and ringing jingle bells. The Lord Mayor of Leeds, Cllr Abigail Marshall Katung, gave a speech during the evening, thanking our members and staff for sharing their festive cheer. Cllr Kevin Ritchie, the city council's Equalities councillor for disabled people, joined us too. A mince pie reception in the bar afterward gave us a chance to meet the trustees and thank all the volunteers.

This year we were able to reintroduce meeting in the evening and ticketing in anticipation of a return to the style of concerts at Leeds Town Hall.

The performers comprised 4 schools from the One Accord choir and about 40 members and volunteers from YAM Singers. Off the Cuff band supported the music alongside accompanist Jo Brook. The choirs sang with enthusiasm and confidence.

Clare Milton Thompson created a winter scene on the stage which gave our concert an immersive, festive feeling. The digital art celebration pictures from YAM members were part of a beautiful backdrop, projected above the singers.

As always, I would like to offer thanks to all the schools, members, day centres, carers, music leaders, trustees and volunteers for their positive ideas and help making the concert happen. An extra thanks to the PCH caretaking team for ensuring Pudsey Civic Hall meets the needs of our members and those who attend our Christmas concert and other events. I would also like to remember Simon Lindley, who passed away this year, and who was a friend to YAMSEN as a conductor and MC at the Leeds Town Hall concerts for many years and an ally of our aims and activities.

Joanna Winster

Annual Multi-sensory and Music days. YAMSEN flies to Never, Never Land

This year we were finally back to pre-covid numbers with 200 young people being signed up to come over the four days and 186 attending. 100 of the children came from Leeds schools and the rest came from the surrounding regions: Calderdale - 24, Wakefield 15, Bradford - 19, Kirklees – 12 and North Yorkshire – 16.

The theme was based around the story of Peter Pan with members of the team being characters from the story. We were sad that our usual musicians Kate and Roddy were unable to attend due to illness but we were grateful that a local group of musicians: Eric, Brendon, Alex, Nic and Eddie stepped in to provide the music. Everyone really enjoyed their playing. We were delighted that Catherine from YAM came along to play Tinkerbell! Eddie made a scary Captain Hook and Sarah a delightful Peter Pan.

The days were a combination of live music and accessible sensory activities with a backdrop of an amazing stage set and an interactive sensory cave all created by Kate Rossiter. One memorable moment was the musicians playing the sound of the clock whilst the children passed around crocodile puppets - when the ticking stopped, they all pretended to attack Captain Hook who sank beneath a sea of blue material.

This year we hired a long wheelbase van from Salford van hire and Gail and Diane had a new experience driving it! As usual the YAMSEN team of volunteers worked extremely hard and created a magical day for all the children.

We would like to thank:

- Leeds Music Education Partnership (LMEP) Artforms council funding.
- ArtForms for their support in kind in the form of staff.
- Leeds Equipment store for providing hoists.
- The staff at Pudsey Civic Hall
- YAMSEN volunteers

Diane Paterson

Work supported by the music hub Leeds Music Education Partnership (LMEP) which ended August 2024 and became the West Yorkshire Music Hub in 2025

1) Accord Choir.

The Accord Choir is comprised of pupils from across schools from Leeds and Bradford. Some attend all the rehearsals others have a mix of in school sessions and live rehearsals. We have continued to rehearse at Holy name Parish Hall for the whole of this year, which has worked very well.

Staff:

- Sophie Thiruchelvam—choir leader/ admin
- Diane Paterson- accompanist/ choir leader/ admin
- Jo Brook- accompanist from November 2024
- Eddie Hyndes- band member from January 2025
- Donal O’Kane—volunteer
- Hannah Rosebury – admin support

Challenges

There is still an ongoing issue with getting schools to fully commit to live rehearsals. It is not for lack of willing from staff who attend but other factors such as lack of staff in schools to support or transport. To aid schools with this situation, we put a new flexible rehearsal offer in September 2025. It also helped Sophie predict the choir participation for the Christmas concert.

The other challenge of the year was having the Christmas concert in the evening. Some schools found it very difficult to get parents to bring/ collect children from the concert so this affected the final turnout for the concert- from our final rehearsals (live or in school) attendance was 78 but we only got 38 at the concert.

Work over the year

Our summer concert was attended by the same three schools as last year, sadly none of the singing workshop schools could attend this year. They coped really well as Sophie had Covid on the day so couldn’t conduct. Joanna and Diane did a fantastic job leading and accompanying the choir to give a great performance. At the end of the Summer term, we sent out a questionnaire to schools to ask about rehearsal schedules, what were the barriers to attendance, what pupils and staff enjoyed. We had some excellent feedback which helped us create the new flexible rehearsal offer.

In the Autumn term we introduced this new rehearsal offer- schools had 3 choices

- a) To attend all live rehearsals
- b) To attend the first and last rehearsal and have the extra session in school
- c) To attend the last rehearsal before the concert and the other sessions in school.

This helped us increase attendance from 3 schools to 4 attending rehearsals, with another 2 schools just rehearsing in school. One school chose to attend all rehearsals, two other schools to attend two rehearsals with supplementary sessions in school. We were really pleased to gain a school, who had not performed with us since 2019, which was fabulous. From other schools we had some large numbers at

rehearsals, with lots of new members but sadly the Christmas concert attendance was about half of those who had rehearsed.

Despite the lower numbers the choir performed brilliantly, really focused on Sophie and managed to sing in parts having never had a chance to rehearse it with Off by Heart. Both staff and students loved the night and gave their all, which is all we can ask for. Jo covered the accompanist role for our last two rehearsals and also played for the concert, which we were very grateful for.

The spring term attendance has been patchy so far, with a couple of schools not attending so far. We are hoping that we will have 3 schools at our March rehearsal. Another school is definitely joining back for summer term and will attend the Ilkley concert for the first time. We are hoping to welcome a new school from Bradford the summer term, who sadly have a clash for the final summer concert but still want to attend. We have had interest from another Leeds school who used to attend but might not make it this year but hopefully for September 2025. Sophie is going to encourage them to come and watch the summer concert as an introduction for students. We have welcomed Jo permanently as our accompanist and Eddie to come and play bass for us. The students have loved the extra musical sound world he brings to the music. This has allowed Diane to take on an extra choir conductor role or help support with refreshments when Donal has not been available. We have also been asked if we wanted to attend the Leeds LMEP arena concert on the 1st July. Only two schools are interested in taking part and Sophie is in the process of trying to get them involved in the secondary choir.

Singing workshop in schools

Sophie has been carrying out singing workshops to support the choir in 2 schools, for the summer term which reduced to just one in the Autumn. Where they can't take part Sophie keeps them updated with news about events.

We have continued with last year's pricing system, so schools book a set number of places for rehearsals, and they can fill them with different pupils if they so wish. This was a little more variable for Christmas concert rehearsals, so we just charged per pupil who attended for these to make it fair and accessible for schools.

Sophie Thiruchelvam

2) Musical Communication group

Four families regularly attended the musical communication group in the summer term of 2024. All the children with ASD attending were due to start school in September which meant that the group would come to a natural end in July. It was wonderful to see the progress the children made during 2024 and one parent put in writing that she believed that the excellent progress of her twin boys in communication and social play was largely down to the group. She was able to follow through ideas introduced in the group at home and to share those ideas with the nursery they attended as well. The progress of these two boys in particular, over the two years they had attended, demonstrated the value both of the total

communication methods used and the importance of repetition and visual/object prompts to develop gradually understanding and attention. All of the children made progress, and the parents all reported that they found the sessions helpful and were able to use some of the ideas at home.

Building the parents' confidence in communicating more effectively with their children is a key aim. One child already had some good communication skills but experienced a lot of social anxiety so that initially he spent a lot of time observing. Before long, however, he began to enjoy taking part in many of the musical games and build up confidence in interacting within the small group so that by the summer term of 2024 he was initiating some interactions. An incidental but important benefit was the friendships and mutual support the parents developed over time through the group. The group came to a natural end in summer 2024.

A new group began in January 2025. Three families have been attending regularly during the spring term. This group has a wider age and ability range than the previous group but in a short space of time we have built up a good repertoire of musical games and activities. It is interesting to note that families are prepared to travel significant distances to attend.

Extra support: I am very grateful for the support of Diane this term and of two Leeds University students who have also joined us occasionally. The group is quite intensive and having extra adults to facilitate activities as well as to help with getting out equipment and putting it all away again is very much appreciated. Parents also value having extra adults available. The Opal centre has proved to be in many ways an ideal venue offering a large safe space with car parking and disabled toilet facilities. We are made very welcome.

Ros Huntley

3) Piano lessons at Meadows Park in Benton Park secondary school

Lessons take place in the staff room at Benton Park for 4 pupils, 3 boys and 1 girl all KS3/4 and have special educational needs including autism. Three are learning to play piano and one is singing. One piano pupil is now in mainstream music lessons and working towards GCSE music.

Lesson content includes exploring different sounds, rhythms, reading, sometimes using colour to help and various styles of music. Each lesson is approximately 20 minutes long. I'm pleased with the progress so far and all four pupils are engaging well in their lessons

Jo Brooke

Events in partnership with the Wharfedale Festival

1) Music Makers Class at the Craiglands Hotel Ilkley

This year we had a full house with seven groups taking part, a total of 45 children. The performances were all really entertaining and included:

- a solo piano piece – Green Meadows,
- Samba drumming - Kingsland,
- Reggae guitar playing Green Meadows.
- Creative pieces to accompany songs, Harehills Primary and Rawdon St Peters Orchard Class(Green Meadows Pupils),
- a creative musical setting of the Hungry Caterpillar - St Lukes Priar
- a student composition performed by Broomfield Band.

Thank you to the staff who work with these pupils and brought them along: Chloe Wood, Joanna Winster, Sophie Thiruchelvam and Jack Zealey.

2) **Summer concert at the Kings Hall Ilkley**

It's always a delight to end the year with this annual summer concert in the wonderful setting of the Kings Hall in Ilkley. At this event we bring together both the YAMSEN choirs: The adult choir - YAMSEN singers and the children's Accord choir. We were pleased to involve the Jazz band Topaz to perform two sets which everyone enjoyed dancing to and we invited Harehills primary school to perform the songs they'd played in the Music Maker's class.

As Sophie has mentioned in the Accord Choir report she unexpectedly developed covid on the day and was unable to lead the choir. Diane and Joanna stepped in and the children and young people sang really well even with different leaders.

Thank you to Jo Brooke and Eddie and members of Off the Cuff band for accompanying.

Diane Paterson

Admin assistant's report

I joined YAMSEN in September 2024 and have been supporting with organising events/training, helping to update the website/social media and some general admin tasks (such as invoicing, creating a contact database and material to tell schools about what we can offer). Thank you to everyone for making me feel so welcome and helping me to learn about the different activities that are going on.

Hannah Rosebury

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
1			YAMSEN AGM accounts 2024-25					
2	Receipts	Payments			receipts	payments	Restricted	
3	2023-24	2023-24			2024-25	2024-25		
4	£431.00	£835.00	Adult Music RTR	A1RTR	£505.00	£675.34	£1,456.37	
5	£9,994.99	£7,541.55	Adult Music	A1	£15,389.96	£7,837.09	£2,337.00	
6			Admin	A2		£689.50		
7	£0.00	£0.00	Books	B1	£20.38			
8	£0.00	£953.25	Christmas Concert	C1	£493.97	£1,140.55		
9			Communications	C2	£430.00	£1,262.00		
10	£120.00	£0.00	Unspecified Donations	D1	£1,095.00			
11	£0.00	£882.50	Fees/Insurance	F1		£208.28		
12	£0.00	£300.00	Honorarium	H1		£300.00		
13	£40.00		Instrument Library	L1	£650.00		£650.00	
14	£6,322.75	£5,806.64	LMEP	LMEP	£1,633.60	£3,062.25		
15	£330.00		Membership	M1	£60.00			
16	£160.00	£138.99	Miscellaneous Gift	M2				
17	£159.17	£153.41	Miscellaneous Fraud	M2F	£859.00	£859.00		
18	£7,836.00	£7,023.05	Multi Sensory Day	P1	£6,063.00	£8,914.95		
19			One Accord	O1	£707.50	£1,524.37		
20	£2,000.00	£2,144.00	ONE Accord Kirklees	O1K				
21	£0.00	£1,120.00	One Accord Wakefield	O1W				
22			Publicity/Stationery	P2		£1,090.33		
23	£0.00		Room rent	R1		£612.50		
24			Student	S2		£15.00		
25	£0.00	£2,500.00	Training	T1		£246.71		
26	£0.00	£200.00	Workshops	W1	£200.00			
27	£0.00	£0.00	Wharfedale	W2		£70.00		
28	£27,393.91	£29,598.39	Totals		£28,107.41	£28,507.87	£4,443.37	
29								
30			Total Income		£28,107.41			
31			Total Expenditure		£28,507.87			
32			Balance Income Over Expenditure		-£400.46			
33								
34			Bank Balances					
35								
36			Santander Bank	Santander	£9,549.86			
37			Virgin	Virgin	28778.11			
38			Total in both Banks		£38,327.97			
39								
40			Opening Balance		£38,728.42			
41			Income Over Expenditure		-£400.46			
42			Total in Banks/Closing Balance		£38,327.96			
43								
44			Restricted Funds		£4,443.37			
45			General Funds		£33,884.59			
46			Total		£38,327.96			

26-Sep-25

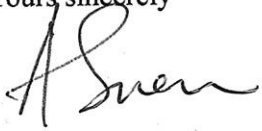
Diane Paterson, YAMSEN Secretary
Pudsey Civic Hall
Dawson's Corner
Pudsey
LS28 5TA

Dear Diane,

The accounts presented for FY2024/25 including bank statements receipts, invoices copies and the spreadsheet analysis have been reconciled and are in accord with the statement prepared for the YAMSEN AGM.

	Santander	Virgin Money	Total
Opening Balance as per bank statements as at 1st March 2024	£9,904.69	£28,823.73	£38,728.42
Incom for Yr 24/25	£28,087.04	£ 20.38	£28,107.42
Expenditure for Yr24/25	£28,441.87	£ 66.00	£28,507.87
Less unrepresented Cheques	£ 0.00	£ 0.00	£ 0.00
Balance agreed with Bank Statements as at 28 Feb 25	£9,549.86	£28,778.11	£38,327.97

Yours sincerely



Aretha Suen
Retired Former Finance Officer of ArtForms LCC