



Exeter Philharmonic Choir

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Charity registration number: 1043617

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*Not part of the formal financial statements – this is enclosed for members' information only

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Charity Registration Number	1043617
Principal Office	39 Bishops Way Exeter Devon EX2 7PF
Trustees	Mrs Janet Ainley Mr Roland Chant Mr Andrew Henderson (<i>Co-opted</i>) Mrs Victoria Henderson Mrs Charlotte Hodgson Ms Adrienne Long Mr Geoff Poad (<i>resigned 15 March 2025</i>) Mr Shaun Sellings Mr Martin Stubbings Mrs Ann Weiler
Bankers	The Cooperative Bank plc PO Box 250 Delf House Southway Skelmersdale WN8 6WT
Insurers	Making Music Commercial Combined Policy (provided by Covea Insurers) 4 London Wall Place London EC2Y 5AU
Independent Examiner	Rowan House Accountants 5 Earl Richards Road North Exeter EX2 6AQ
Choir Website	www.exeterphilharmonic.org.uk

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements of the Exeter Philharmonic Choir ('the Choir') for the year ended 30 June 2025.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on page 13 and comply with the regulations of the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, and the provisions of the Choir's Constitution.

Our Objective

The objective of the Choir is to maintain, develop, and promote public education in, and appreciation of the art and science of music, in all its aspects.

To support our objective, the Choir holds a strong ethos of pursuing the highest possible standard of performance, achieved through our rehearsals, our choral direction and training, our members' commitment, and the engagement of professional soloists and instrumental ensembles for all our concerts.

Our Governance and Administration

Founded in 1846, the Choir is a charity, registered with the Charity Commission (registration number: 1043617) and is governed by the Making Music Model Constitution (developed with the Charity Commission and updated in October 2021). The Choir adopted this Constitution on 25th September 2023.

Under the terms of the Making Music Model Constitution (October 2021), the Choir is managed by a committee whose members also constitute the trustees. The committee comprises trustees elected from and by the members (Elected Trustees) and trustees co-opted by existing trustees (Co-opted Trustees). The committee must include 3 Officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) and a minimum of 3 other trustees.

The Choir at a general meeting elects the trustees for a 3-year fixed term of office. All trustees are eligible for re-election for a fixed number of 3-year terms as determined by the Choir in its rules and regulations.

During 2024/2025 the committee has comprised 10 trustees (9 elected and 1 coopted) and has held bi-monthly meetings. Meetings of the Officers (Co-chairs, Secretary and Treasurer) and its three sub-committees (Programme, Publicity and Choral Pilgrimage) have been held regularly, as required.

Over the reporting year, the committee reviewed the overall organisational structure of the Choir, including the many roles that choir members carry out. A new team structure has been put in place with each team led by a trustee. The structure is designed to ensure that all choir roles are supported and there is more effective two-way communication between team members and the committee and its sub-committees.

The committee also implemented a refresh of the Choir's visual identity to provide a more modern look for the Choir and allow more effective use on digital media, and developed a new Friends Scheme to offer supporters more enhanced benefits and greater involvement in the Choir's activities.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Our Membership

The Choir ended the season with a membership of 98, having welcomed 9 new members during the year. We also sadly bid farewell to several very long-standing members.

In line with the Choir's policy to conduct vocal assessments every four years, our Director of Music undertook assessments of all members of the Choir (except those who had recently auditioned) during the first 6 months of the season. The purpose of the exercise was to confirm whether members were still comfortable singing in their relevant sections and to provide an opportunity for members to discuss any issues with their singing. The assessments particularly highlighted what members value most about the Choir and the desire for more vocal coaching. The committee has duly responded to this request and has arranged for a professional vocal coach to run a rehearsal session during our next season.

Fundraising

As well as finalising the concert plans for the 2025/26 season, the Choir's programme sub-committee has been working hard on developing the arrangements for the performance of *Carmina Burana* in November 2026 (in the Great Hall, University of Exeter). As this concert will involve groups of young singers and instrumentalists and represents a major outreach project for the choir, the committee has set up a fundraising group to work on raising funds from grant making organisations, sponsorship and general fundraising, to support this element of the performance.

Public Benefit

Mindful of the guidance of the Charity Commission on providing public benefit, the Choir performs concerts which are open to the public and which offer a range of ticket prices, including discounts for specific groups.

Our annual Choral Workshop enables members of the public to sing with choir members in a full day workshop on a major choral work with the Choir's Director of Music.

As outlined above, in our programme plans for 2026/2027, we have already put in place a major outreach opportunity for local young singers and instrumentalists to join with us in one of our 180th season concerts.

The Choir values diversity and membership is open to all, but as with many similar organisations, this is subject to an audition to ensure that an applicant's vocal ability meets the standard set by the Director of Music.

The Choir also supports local charities through retiring collections at our Carol Concerts and Lord Mayor's Concert in March. (Further details of the charities supported and amounts raised will be found under the Financial Review in this report).

TRUSTEE'S REPORT

Our 2024/2025 Season

The Choir has again had a very full and busy 2024/25 season.

Tour to Spain: 24 – 30 September 2024

At the end of September 2024 a group of 47 Choir members, together with 9 friends and family, travelled to Salamanca in Northern Spain for a five-day singing tour.

The Choir launched the tour with a concert on 21 September in St Margaret's Church, Topsham. In Spain, we performed concerts in the Old Cathedral of Salamanca and in the Cathedral of Valladolid, and finished by singing in a service at The Basilica of St Teresa in Avila.

Our programme was carefully chosen to showcase a selection of English sacred music across the ages, from the Renaissance period through to contemporary composers, and was very well received by large and appreciative audiences in all venues. One of the highlights of the programme was '*Un Salmo Espanol*', a work specially commissioned for the tour from our Associate Director of Music, Stephen Tanner, which references Spanish rhythms and harmonies in its setting of Psalm 21.

The group also had plenty of time for sight-seeing, particularly in the stunning city of Salamanca. Sadly, during the week several members succumbed to Covid, which meant they were unable to participate fully in our visits and concerts, but this did not seem to lessen the overall enjoyment and high levels of satisfaction with the tour.

09 November 2024: Handel's *Messiah* in Holy Trinity Church, Exmouth

We then began the full choir year with a performance of Handel's *Messiah* with Joanne Greene and 'The Handel Sinfony', an ensemble of fellow professionals; Sam Cobb soprano; Luthien Brackett alto; Oscar Golden-Lee tenor; and James Geidt bass. This concert was particularly notable as it was the Choir's first performance in a 'semi-scrambled' formation (small groups of all 4 sections), and was supported by small instrumental forces which allowed for more subtle effects. We were, as always, made very welcome by those at Holy Trinity Church.

17 and 18 December 2024: Carol Concerts in Exeter Cathedral

A selection of well-known festive choral works interspersed with traditional carols for all to sing, in the atmospheric setting of Exeter Cathedral. The Choir was joined by trumpeters Cameron Todd and Ross Brown. As well as their very moving rendition of *Den yndigste rose* by Frederik Magle, they also displayed their virtuosic playing in Handel's *Let the bright seraphim* with soprano Milly Forrest, and especially in Cecilia McDowall's *A winter's night*. The programme was interspersed with interludes about Devon Christmases, past and present, by local historian, Dr Todd Gray MBE.

15 February 2025: Public Choral Workshop

We hosted a very well attended workshop on Mozart's *Great Mass in C minor*. Nearly 200 singers gathered in The Mint Methodist Church Centre for a glorious day of singing. The experience was greatly enhanced by members of the Lyric Ensemble joining us for an informal performance in the afternoon.

TRUSTEE'S REPORT

15 March 2025: Lord Mayor's Concert in Exeter Cathedral

This all-Mozart programme gave us a wonderful opportunity to experience some of the composer's most sublime choral music: *Great Mass in C minor*; 'Laudate Dominum' from *Solemn Vespers*; and *Regina Coeli*. We were pleased to welcome back the London Mozart Players, with soloists Lucinda Cox, soprano; Daisy Walford, soprano; Ruairi Bowen, tenor; and Tim Mirfin, bass. We were also delighted to feature rising star violinist Joel Munday, performing the *Violin Concerto No. 1*.

14 June 2025: 'A Feast of English Choral Music' in Exeter Cathedral

Our singing year ended with an evening featuring some of the greatest English choral and organ music of the late 19th and early 20th centuries including works by the musical giants of their time: Ralph Vaughan Williams, Hubert Parry, Arthur Sullivan and Herbert Howells. We welcomed celebrated baritone Thomas Humphreys who joined us in singing Vaughan Williams' evocative work, *Five Mystical Songs* as well as performing Arthur Sullivan's *The Lost Chord*. Stephen Tanner, the Choir's Associate Director of Music and a renowned keyboard player, performed pieces by Edward Bairstow and Herbert Howells that showcased both the organist and the organ.

Thanks

At our final concert, Exeter Philharmonic Choir thanked Councillor Kevin Mitchell for his enthusiastic support of the Choir during the two years of his role as The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Exeter. In recognition of this, we were delighted that he has accepted our invitation to become an Honorary Vice President of the Choir.

Social Activities

A group of members enjoyed a day trip to Wells on Wednesday 30 April 2025.

TRUSTEE'S REPORT

Financial Review

Having reported a very successful 2023/24 series of concerts at last year's AGM (a £2,800 surplus) the season just past has concluded with a deficit of just over £2,000 recorded across all concerts. The loss mainly arises from lower than expected ticket sales for the final concert of the season 'A Feast of English Choral Music'.

Subscription income at £17,520 continues to be the Choir's main source of non-concert revenue. Internal fund raising across Singing Mornings amounted to just over £1,000. An increase in the number of members contributing through the Gift Aid scheme generated an additional £800 of valuable income, resulting in a total claim of £3,242.

However, day-to-day running costs also recorded an overall deficit of just over £1,600 primarily due to increases across rehearsal and promotional costs. This deficit position was reduced by two significant donations, totalling just over £1,800.

The Choir continues to facilitate fundraising by other charities through retiring collections, and a grand total of £4,227 was raised during the season. (£3339.09 for Community, Equality, Disability Action in December and £888.86 for Force Cancer Charity in March).

During March 2025 just over half of the Choir's investment within the COIF Charities Investment Fund was cashed in due to falling share prices and market volatility arising from events in Europe, America and the Middle East. Although markets have since stabilised to some degree, this action provided certainty that the Choir had the reserves to fund financial commitments that have been made across next season and 2026/27, the Choir's 180th anniversary season.

Reserves

At the start of the season the Choir held more in reserve than would normally be required to cover losses arising from having to cancel or abandon concerts, or from lower than expected ticket sales. As this position is contrary to Charity Commission guidelines, the committee duly considered ways in which the Choir could reduce its reserves to an appropriate level. The committee agreed to set up a Development Fund into which a portion of the Choir's overall reserves will be ringfenced (an initial amount of £35,000). This fund will be used towards a programme of activities that support the Choir's charitable objective and provide additional benefits to members.

For the 2025/26 season the Development Fund will be used to fund a major commission, a rehearsal 'Away Day' at Buckfast Abbey Conference Centre to work on the newly commissioned piece with the composer, and a singing weekend with professional vocal coaching.

At the end of the 2024/25 season the choir holds just over £90,000 in reserves split across the Emergency and Development funds. This is adequate to mitigate the risk of financial loss during the 2025/26 season and provide the additional benefits to members outlined above. To mitigate this risk further, the Choir holds insurance with Making Music that covers cancellation or abandonment up to £10,000.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Risk Management and Financial Controls

The treasurer and trustees ensure that the major risks to which the Choir is exposed are analysed regularly and that systems and controls are in place to manage those risks.

The Choir's financial controls include:

- preparation of an annual budget and approval by the full committee
- measurement of performance against the budget after each concert and workshop, and a quarterly review of day to day running costs
- circulation of a financial report to all committee members every three months and discussion of the report at committee meetings
- an annual external examination of the Choir's accounts
- two online signatures before any payment leaves the Choir's bank accounts
- reimbursement of expenses only when incurred on Choir business and on production of valid receipts.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities in Relation to the Financial Statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the Financial Statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

The trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable it to ensure that financial statements comply with the applicable law. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Looking forward

The trustees hope that all members have enjoyed the singing of the past season, both at regular rehearsals and concerts.

Maintaining a large and busy choir and keeping everything going so that we are fully prepared for our public performances takes time and effort. Many members volunteer to carry out essential tasks and together they create efficient and effective EPC teams which are appreciated by all choir members, by those with whom we work and liaise, and by our audiences.

Maintaining the Choir is just one important element; developing it is another. Trustees are enormously grateful to Howard Ionascu, our Director of Music and to Stephen Tanner, our Associate Director of Music, for encouraging, gently nudging and teaching us to be better singers and performers. Under their leadership we are constantly growing in confidence to perform a wide range of repertoire with high quality soloists and ensembles.

There are many exciting events happening in the upcoming season and we feel that we have a particularly special concert in the making in November, when we give the world première of our commissioned work by Cecilia McDowall, *The Weather Book*. A pre-concert talk is also planned involving Cecilia McDowall, Professor Penny Endersby, CEO of The Met Office, Roger Huckle, Music Director of the Bristol Ensemble and Howard Ionascu.

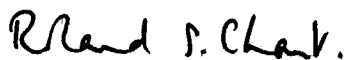
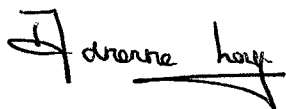
Trustees have also committed resources to an 'Away Day' rehearsal at Buckfast Abbey Conference Centre in October to support the Choir and it will be a privilege to have Cecilia McDowall with us for that day.

In February 2026, there is a weekend rehearsal for our Spring Concert (Handel's 'Solomon') which includes a half-day session on breathing and vocal techniques delivered by an external tutor.

Together with our Carol Concerts and Jazz for a Summer Evening concert, there is much to look forward to in our next season!

Approval of Report

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 10 September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Roland Chant and Adrienne Long
Trustees

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF EXETER PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

I report on the financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 30 June 2025 which are set out on pages 12 to 13.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. The Charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me a reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act 2011; and
- to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Belinda Roome BSc ACA
Rowan House Accountants
5 Earl Richards Road North
Exeter
EX2 6AQ

Date: 29 August 2025

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Last year
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
Donations and legacies	2,206	-	2,206	10
Subscriptions	18,535	-	18,535	17,516
Gift aid claimed	3,422	-	3,422	2,546
Concert income	51,652	-	51,652	60,372
Fundraising, sales of goods, programmes and advertising	7,947	-	7,947	7,666
Dividend and interest income	1,969	-	1,969	1,890
Tour income	-	27,615	27,615	64,846
	<u>85,731</u>	<u>27,615</u>	<u>113,346</u>	<u>154,634</u>
Asset and investment sales	35,000	-	35,000	-
Total receipts	120,731	27,615	148,346	154,634
Payments				
Music director, orchestra and choir fees	49,386	-	49,386	45,781
On-line sales commission and bank charges	3,783	-	3,783	4,396
Venue and other concert expenses	21,943	-	21,943	23,007
Publicity and advertising	8,003	-	8,003	4,298
Fundraising and cost of goods sold	6,015	-	6,015	4,230
Finance Officer	2,750	-	2,750	2,550
Administration and insurance costs	2,138	-	2,138	1,703
Gifts	809	-	809	402
Tour expenditure	-	22,115	22,115	57,651
Governance costs	875	-	875	875
	<u>95,702</u>	<u>22,115</u>	<u>117,817</u>	<u>144,708</u>
Asset and investment purchases	-	-	-	-
Total payments	95,702	22,115	117,817	144,708
Net receipts/(payments)	25,029	5,500	30,529	10,138
Cash funds last year end	40,785	14,277	55,062	44,924
Cash funds this year end	65,814	19,777	85,591	55,062

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 30 JUNE 2025

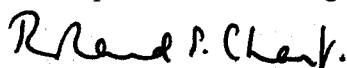
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Last year
	£	£	£	£
Cash funds				
Cash floats	215	-	215	215
Current accounts	13,249	19,777	33,026	49,797
Deposit accounts	52,350	-	52,350	5,050
Total cash funds	65,844	19,777	85,591	55,062
Other monetary assets				
No other monetary assets held	-	-	-	-
Investment assets	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost	Current Market Value	Market Value Last year
COIF Charities Investment Fund - Income Units (Current value is the bid market value at the period end)	Unrestricted	£19,179	£25,541	£62,790
Assets retained for the charity's own use	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost	Market Value	
Musical equipment – new podium	Unrestricted	£3,450	£3,450	
Liabilities	Fund to which asset belongs	Amount due	When due	
Venue costs outstanding relating to June 2025 event	Unrestricted	£3,650	On receipt of invoice	

Notes to the accounts

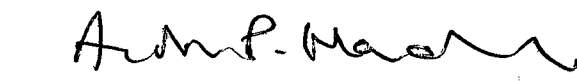
1) Restricted funds represent amounts raised by the Choir members for future tours and social events.

2) The financial statements are prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis.

The financial statements on pages 12 to 13 were approved by the Trustees and authorised for issue on 10 September 2025 and signed on their behalf by:


Roland Chant

Trustee


Andrew Henderson

Trustee

DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR

	2025	2024
	£	£
Income		
Donations and sponsorship	4,706	2,510
Gift Aid Tax reclaimed	3,422	2,546
Membership (incl. friends subscriptions)	18,535	17,515
Fundraising events and appeals	2,347	1,520
Tickets sales (before bank and on-line charges)	51,652	60,372
Programme sales and miscellaneous income	862	1,216
Advertising	725	475
Sale of miscellaneous Choir products	60	705
Music hire and sales	1,453	1,250
Friends and family event income (inc. tour income)	27,615	64,847
Interest and dividends on investments	1,969	1,890
Total income	113,346	154,846
Expenditure		
Conductors, other musicians, music and venues		
Director of Music (inc. travel costs)	15,485	11,871
Assistant Director of Music	720	1,070
Accompanist	2,707	3,248
Soloists	10,781	8,856
Orchestras and organists	19,069	20,735
Music hire and orchestral scores	7,197	1,962
Music purchase	145	223
Rehearsal rooms	4,088	4,668
Concert venues	9,630	17,052
Concert refreshments	1,175	1,095
Ticket sales and on-line payment commissions	3,783	4,396
Performing Rights Society	230	53
Other concert costs	1,029	140
	76,039	75,369
Programmes, tickets and other concert costs		
Ticket and programme production costs	1,430	1,964
Publicity and advertising	8,003	4,114
Purchase of miscellaneous Choir products (inc. new podium)	3,658	79
	13,091	6,157
Administrations costs		
Insurance and subscriptions	1,430	1,375
Finance officer	2,750	2,550
Website costs	149	185
Printing, postage and stationery	230	143
Independent examiner's fee	875	875
	5,763	5,128
Other costs		
Tours and social events	22,115	57,651
Gifts	809	402
	22,924	58,053

Exeter Philharmonic Choir Annual Report 2025

Total expenditure	<u>117,817</u>	<u>144,708</u>
Net (expenditure)/income (excl. investment sales)	<u>(4,471)</u>	<u>10,138</u>

Pages 14 and 15 do not form part of the formal financial statements and is for information only.