

SOUTH DOWNS
SUMMER MUSIC
INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

SOUTH DOWNS SUMMER MUSIC INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Charity registration number: 1151916

Trustees' Report and Accounts
for the year to 31st December 2025

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Trustees' Report

For the year to 31st December 2025

Objectives and Activities

The purpose of the charity as set out in the governing document is to promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of music, in particular by the organising of a festival of music to be held annually for public attendance in and around Alfriston, East Sussex.

The charity promotes and produces the annual South Downs Summer Music International Festival, a varied programme of music in and around the village of Alfriston, featuring both world class and up and coming young artists. During the festival week each July the charity provides a programme of master classes and performance opportunities for a group of young musicians. The charity has close ties with the Hastings International Piano Competition, a prize winner of which is invited to perform at the festival.

The charity also organises an informal spring concert in Alfriston to promote the festival and encourage engagement with supporters in the local community.

The trustees, artistic directors and festival management would like to thank the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Andrew's with Lullington, Reverend Prebendary Stephen Stuckes and his Benefice Team and the church wardens for their permission and support to stage the festival. Their assistance and understanding is invaluable. The superb acoustic of St Andrew's and quirkiness of Lullington provide unique venues for a week of world class music in the South Downs National Park.

The trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Achievements and Performance

The 2025 festival, the 19th since the festival was founded, again successfully presented a full programme of 10 concerts curated by Artistic Directors Zahra Benyounes and Emily Holland with performances by invited distinguished musicians, the Festival Orchestra and the Piatti Quartet.

Longstanding favourite Julian Bliss joined the Festival Orchestra to open the week with an uplifting programme of English music. He stayed to perform an evening of clarinet quintets including works by Brahms and Coleridge Taylor. The Piatti Quartet presented a Thursday lunchtime programme of chamber music including Elgar and Tchaikovsky. Thursday evening offered a rare opportunity to hear Wynton Marsalis's *A Fiddler's Tale*, a masterpiece for 7 musicians and narrated by eminent actor, Clarke Peters.

Friday showcased the Festival's close connection with the Hastings International Piano Competition with a free lunchtime concert by prize winner Mariamna Sherling on the magnificent Steinway D grand. Friday night was ignited by a vibrant, virtuoso performance by Alexis Cardenas and Recoveco who came from France to delight with their distinctive blend of sensual melodies and jazz improvisations from Latin America.

Lullington hosted the relaxed Saturday lunchtime concert by the Mead Men. This is always a popular free event with an idyllic location, picnics and great music. Early evening past and

present Artistic Directors came together to perform an evocative Nordic programme culminating in Grieg's thrilling piano Concerto arrangement with string quartet. Following their sell-out success in 2024 The Ticklers returned to the Longman Brewery barn in the evening for more toe tapping tunes and a bit of a party.

After a week of masterclasses, performance and generally assisting, the talented Talland Quartet closed the 2025 festival on Sunday afternoon with pieces by Mozart and Fanny Mendelssohn. This free concert, with a retiring collection in aid of the restoration of St Andrews, is always well supported by an audience keen to encourage young musicians establishing their professional careers.

The Artistic Directors and trustees are delighted that they have been able to present a programme of exhilarating, world class performances, some with free access, whilst generating much needed funds for the restoration of iconic St Andrew's church and nurturing the professional careers of young musicians.

Financial Review

This Trustee Report and the Accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis as permitted under section 133 of the Charities Act 2011.

Overall income for the year of £49,982, excluding Gift Aid relating to previous periods, represents an increase of over 50% compared to the year to 31st December 2024 (£32,952). This reflects the efforts of the trustees and festival management to encourage support from individuals and local businesses. The trustees are particularly grateful for a generous unrestricted donation given by the Manifold Trust. Ticket sales also showed an encouraging 39% increase to £23,045 following a review of pricing by the trustees. It is gratifying that audiences continue to appreciate and support the high quality performances and varied programme curated by the artistic directors.

The payments associated with the provision of charitable activities increased 12% to £38,834 leaving a net movement of funds for the year of £11,148 (-£1,740 31/12/24). Total cash funds held at 31st December were £24,378.

Reserves policy

Money is held in reserve to cover continuing expenditure throughout the year arising from booking artists and facilities for the current and future festivals and charitable activities. No specific monetary value is ascribed to reserves or designated by the trustees but the level of funds is regularly monitored by the trustees.

Risk management

The Trustees consider that the principal risks and uncertainties are:

- Late cancellation or indisposition of booked artists
- Failure to attract and retain sponsorship and donations
- External conditions (e.g. pandemic, extreme weather) affecting ticket sales.

These risks are managed by the Artistic Directors and the Festival Manager, reporting as necessary to the Trustees.

Structure, Governance and Management

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The charity was established by a Constitution adopted on 17th February 2013, amended in 2018 to adopt the present name of the charity. The charity is an unincorporated Trust registered with the Charity Commission, registered number 1151916. The day-to-day management of the charity is delegated to a committee comprising the Trustees with the Artistic Directors and Festival Manager.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name:	South Downs Summer Music International Festival
Registered charity number:	1151916
Charity's principal address:	8 Heath Road, Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire MK17 9AL

Trustees

Jeremy Young (Chair)
Paul Bendit
Violet Hancock
Anthony Davy ACA
Rosemary Ford (appointed 1st May 2025)

None of the trustees received remuneration during the period in respect of their role as trustee. Jeremy Young received performance fees and expenses as detailed in Note 2 to the accounts.

Artistic Directors

Zahra Benyounes
Emily Holland

Festival Manager

Orsi Torják

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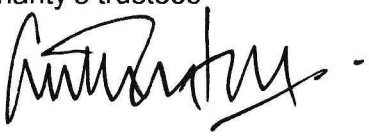
Website and email

https://www.southdownssummermusic.co.uk/

southdownssummermusic@gmail.com

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.
Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature: 

Full Name: Anthony Davy

Position: Trustee

Date: 23/10/26

SOUTH DOWNS SUMMER MUSIC INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
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Receipts and Payments

For the year to 31st December 2025

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	*Prior year*
Receipts:					
Donations and gifts	£20,104	-	-	£20,104	*£11,000*
Gift Aid	£0	-	-	£0	*£2,632*
Membership subscriptions and sponsorships which are in substance donations	£5,530	-	-	£5,530	*£2,210*
Ticket and programme sales	£23,398	-	-	£23,398	*£16,930*
Programme adverts	£950	-	-	£950	*£180*
Gross Income	£49,982	-	-	£49,982	*£32,952*
Payments:					
Charitable activities	£38,834	-	-	£38,834	*£34,692*
Total Payments	£38,834	-	-	£38,834	*£34,692*
Net movement in funds	£11,148	-	-	£11,148	*£(1,740)*
Total funds last year end	£13,230	-	-	£13,230	*£14,970*
Total funds this period end	£24,378	-	-	£24,378	*£13,230*

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Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period 31st December 2025

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	*Prior year*
Cash funds:					
Cash at bank and in hand	£24,378	-	-	£24,378	*£13,230*
Santander	£0	-	-	£0	*£0*
Lloyds					
Total cash funds	£24,378	-	-	£24,378	*£13,230*
Other monetary assets:					
Debtors and Prepayments	£5,828	-	-	£5,828	*£2,200*
Liabilities:					
Accruals and deferred income	£981	-	-	£981	*£0*

Signed on behalf of all the trustees:



Signature

Print Name Jeremy Young Date 23/10/26

Signature 

Print Name Anthony Davy Date 23/10/26

1.1 Basis of accounting

This Trustee Report and the Accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis as permitted under section 133 of the Charities Act 2011.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity.

1.2 Going concern

These accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis and the charity has sufficient liquid funds to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

2. Related parties

Paul Bendit is a trustee and a director of Metro Drinks Limited, a major sponsor of the festival under their brand Folkington's. Metro Drinks Limited made a cash donation of £713 (£905 2024).

Jeremy Young, trustee, received festival performance fees of £600 (£1,000 2024).

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Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees of South Downs Summer Music International Festival (Registered Charity no 1151916) on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2025 set out on pages 1 to 7

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2025.

As the charity's trustees, 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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:  Date: 21 October 202

Name: Crispin Patrick Freeman

Relevant professional qualification: Chartered Accountant

Address:
Sanctuary
Winton Street
Alfriston
BN26 5UL