Association of Teachers of Singing

Trustees Annual Report 2025

For the year ending 31 December 2025

Introduction

2025 marked the 50th Anniversary of AOTOS, a significant milestone in the organisation's history, which was highlighted by increased member engagement, new initiatives and a hugely successful summer conference at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in July. The online series of CPD events has been built and developed further with opportunities for learning as well as networking being offered online. The year also marked a continuation of the changes implemented with the rebrand and refreshed IT capabilities started in 2024, with further streamlining and modernisation of systems and processes to set AOTOS up for the next 50 years.

1. Objectives

The objective of the charity is to advance, facilitate and promote education in the teaching of singing and connected subjects for the public benefit.

In the furtherance of the above objective, the Association will act by:

(1) bringing together teachers of singing and other interested persons at annual national conferences and regional events;

(2) providing, or assisting in the provision of, teacher training initiatives and courses; and

(3) disseminating knowledge of the practice and theory of the teaching of singing

2. Activities

Professional development lies at the heart of our organisation with two main streams of activities: early career training and continuing professional development (CPD).

Early career training is offered through our Essentials teacher training course, which continues to be popular with members and non-members.

CPD offerings are focused on a combination of national conferences, regional professional development days, an online series of events for members and a range of publications including regular newsletters, our annual review magazine and our Voices of AOTOS publication.

Additional information regarding each of these can be found in the relevant sections below.

3. Administration

Trustees (CIO Charity Commission number 1190787)

Pamela Sharp (Hay)	Chair
Edwin Pitt Mansfield	Past Chair
Jenna Brown	South West Area Representative, Editor (from 1 February 2025), Chair Elect (from 20 July 2025)
Sarah Taylor	Secretary
Julie Thompson	North Area Representative
Emily Gray	South East Area Representative
Fiona Shelfer	Scotland Area Representative
Charlotte Mendly	Central Area Representative (resigned 15 March 2025)
Joy Turner	Teacher Development Director
Robert Lines	Communications Director (resigned 14 December 2025)
Laura Thomas	Councillor at Large – Corporate Partnerships (resigned 11 October 2025)
Jan Spooner Swabey	Councillor at Large - 50th Anniversary Liaison (until 20 July 2025)
Nicola-Jane Kemp	Councillor at Large - Liaison to Chair Elect (until 20 July 2025)
Carrie Birmingham	Conference Director and Chair Elect (resigned 14 January 2025)
Louisa Morgan	Editor (resigned 24 January 2025)

Support Team

Georgia Barrington	Operations Manager
Stephanie Blake	Accountant (resigned 6 August 2025)
Tatiana Kidder	Finance Officer (from 10 September 2025)

Principal address

The Gateway, 85-101 Sankey Street, Warrington, Cheshire, WA1 1SR

Independent examiner

Colin Dadswell
Caladine Limited, Chantry House, 22 Upperton Road, Eastbourne,BN21 1BF

Structure, governance and management

The Association of Teachers of Singing is a CIO, formed on 1 November 2020. The governing document is available on our website www.aotos.org.uk.

The trustees are listed above and are normally elected by members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to form the council of trustees which manages the Association. There were 3 full

council meetings during 2025, in March, July and October. Additionally there was a strategy meeting in January and three extra-ordinary meetings in January, May and December. The Association is primarily based in England and Wales, but runs occasional events in Scotland and has strong links to the European Voice Teachers Association (EVTA). We welcome any singing teacher who wishes to join, regardless of geographical boundaries.

Trustees are elected for a term of office, which is three years in all cases apart from the Chairs who occupy a six-year cycle, as defined in the constitution. In all roles other than the chairs, trustees are eligible to be reelected for on an annual basis at the end of their initial three year term.

The role of trustees within AOTOS has historically involved a significant amount of voluntary administrative work, alongside the strategic role of trusteeship. This has included training and events management, marketing and communications, editorial work and operational project delivery among other things. It is becoming increasingly clear to the current trustees that this amount of voluntary work is unsustainable, whilst also fulfilling the obligations of trusteeship. This issue is being resolved in two ways. Firstly some work is being delegated to non-trustee volunteers, drawn from the membership. Volunteers are currently supporting editorial work and corporate partnership liaison with plans to use volunteers to support event facilitation in 2026. Additionally, the operational model for the AOTOS is being reviewed, with plans to make use of freelance workers for more specialist operational roles including events management and marketing.

Support team

Our support team is vital to the smooth running of the organisation.

August saw the departure of the association's accountant after almost six years with AOTOS, during which she ensured robust and efficient financial management of the association, ensuring compliance with financial reporting and monitoring requirements. This change was taken as an opportunity to revise and re-prioritise the role and a new Finance Officer was recruited in September. The new Finance Officer is developing our financial reporting, budgeting and forecasting processes to give trustees a clearer picture of our financial situation, and the ability to make longer term strategic plans, ensuring we meet our charitable objectives in a sustainable way, ensuring the association is on a firm financial footing.

Our operations manager has begun to take a more strategic role in the day-to-day running of the association. As well as managing our operational activity, she has taken on additional responsibilities for events management, taking on the role of Conference Director which was previously a trustee role. In addition to this, she is taking the lead on ensuring our new website and CRM system are maintained and improved to ensure smooth operational delivery.

These operational roles are vital for the ongoing success of AOTOS and we thank our Operations Manager and Finance Officer (and previous Accountant) for their ongoing support and flexibility.

4. Early-Career Training

In 2025 AOTOS continued to offer its unique early-career teacher training course, Essentials. Courses are usually well subscribed and we offer bursaries for those that wish to attend but require additional financial support. We are delighted that our legacy donations have enabled us to offer these bursaries, and that has enabled vulnerable singing teachers to take the course and make positive steps towards entering or re-entering the profession, an effect which is directly in line with our charitable objectives. During 2025 there were four courses with a total of 50 participants, five of whom benefitted from a full or partial bursary.

We are happy that our course leader recruitment policy is now in place as of August 2024, and was so effective that we did not need to recruit for more course leaders in 2025

5. Continuing Professional Development

Our Continuing Professional Development offering for members and non-members remains a core activity of the Association and during 2025 we held a number of face to face and online events.

Online CPD events were offered free to members, covering a wide range of topics including intentional practice, voice therapy, high performance coaching, conducting for singing teachers, ageing voices, and emotion in singing. A regular online networking session was also established to allow members to connect with colleagues and discuss matters of benefit to them.

Four in person regional professional development area days were held across the country in the North, South East, South West and Scottish areas. Events covered a wide range of topics including supporting neurodiverse students, inclusive practice for deaf, trans and non-binary group singing, cultural appropriation and stylistic awareness, working with teenagers and language within classical performances. A total of 46 members and 7 non-members participated in these events.

Unfortunately, due to lack of take-up, the planned area day in the Central area was cancelled for the second year running.

Attendance at regional area days continues to be well below pre-pandemic levels and these events have continued to make a financial loss. Engagement with membership suggests that these events are still valued, but this has not translated into bookings. A new approach is being trialled in 2026 with an online CPD day supported by regional in-person networking events as an attempt to balance member and non-member engagement with financial risk.

The largest CPD offering for AOTOS was again our summer national conference. In celebration of AOTOS's 50th anniversary, the decision was made to make this as big and visible an event as we've ever run. We negotiated to hold it at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in July, in an in-kind arrangement which secured the venue as well as two well-regarded industry professionals, backstage tours, exhibitioners, and for the first time, interviews with delegates for a podcast. New musical genres were represented for the first time, including gospel, Indian classical singing, and vocal distortion, alongside a bigger mix of practical sessions, and more

audience participation and singing. There was a successful gala dinner at a well-known restaurant, and big name speakers from abroad. Response from members has been extraordinarily positive, enjoying the more outward-facing approach, which we hope to build on in our future planning.

Our one-day Autumn Conference continued in this spirit, again held at St Paul's Girls' School, Hammersmith on 1 November. The event was once again held on a Saturday after the success of this change in 2024. Attendance at the events was a little down on the previous year and trustees are considering the benefit of a second national conference as plans for 2026 and beyond are developed. Following the positive response to a deep-dive into a single topic for the 2024 Autumn Conference, this approach was repeated, this time with a focus on somatic techniques.

Both conferences included abstract presentations to continue supporting links with the latest developments in voice and vocal pedagogy research. This initiative is proving very successful and we plan to continue this as part of our ongoing conference programmes. To celebrate the anniversary year, we offered special slots to an early-career researcher and to an abstract on an EEDI subject, both of which proved popular and fulfilled our desire to occupy that space in the wider singing education industry.

Both conferences, and the Online Series, also renewed our commitment to improving our EEDI, with not just new genres approached, but active promotion of speakers of marginalised communities and lesser-known genres. We continue to have discussions about how we can modernise our approach further and do better by our under-represented communities including disabled, female, and LGBT+ groups.

Another way in which we explored how to position ourselves within the industry was through exhibiting at the Music and Drama Education Expo (30-31 Jan 2025). We had excellent footfall to our stand, and signed up many new individual and corporate members, with the corresponding financial benefit, as well as the larger result of brand and name recognition amongst the big players in music education. Continued attendance at Expo forms part of our 5-year plan for increased membership.

We continue to produce a number of publications for members throughout the year, including regular newsletters and an Annual Review magazine. Voices of AOTOS, an online publication focusing on voice and voice pedagogy research was published for the second time in the summer, and discussions are ongoing to consider formalising this and introducing an element of peer review to the publication, something that hasn't yet been done for a voice organisation in Europe.

Our communications also were given a careful reconsideration, and refreshed and modernised accordingly, by way of increased social media presence and better photography at live events. We commissioned a major production company to create a film advertising us, which was shared at a timely moment in the calendar, when bookings for our Summer Conference had opened. The video proved to be a big success, with over 40,000 views and shares, hugely

increasing our profile. We aim to run it again in 2026. Our Communications Director also managed to secure the Google offer of up to £10k of advertising funding that they offer to charities.

Member engagement and feedback from events, alongside developments in the industry continue to drive the strategy for AOTOS' offering. Council continues to consider what the best structure for our operations could be, so that we can continue to deliver on feedback from the members. It was decided that guidance from an external professional would be the most efficient way to achieve this goal, and we booked an industry expert to help us with this in 2026.

Our online members only Facebook group continues to be an active source of networking and support for the membership. Area Representatives also continue to engage with members in their local areas. The online networking events have proved popular and will be continued in 2026, alongside the in-person regional networking events which have been scheduled to follow the new online CPD day in early 2026. Community is a key pillar of AOTOS' mission and the council continues to look for ways to provide opportunities for members to get together and support each other.

6. Partnerships

2024 was a big year for turning AOTOS' operations to face increasingly outwards. Our work began with more talks with our closest partners. Discussions were held with the British Voice Association (BVA) to consider ways our organisations can support each other, including the possibility of joint events. This led to conversations with the Mark Allen Group publications about ways to raise AOTOS's profile including for AOTOS to be one of the featured organisations for Music Teacher Magazine's 2025 Health and Wellbeing column.

Contacts were solidified with St Paul's Girls' School through their newly appointed Director of Partnerships whereby this long-standing relationship was strengthened and extended through discussion of shared interests.

A new relationship was also developed with the Royal Ballet and Opera (formerly Royal Opera House) as the venue for the Association's 50th Anniversary Summer Conference and also to find common interests for future closer relationships between the two organisations including in the areas of healthy singing, music education, and outreach to include better pedagogy and research.

Connections were also made with Making Music to discuss the expansion of AOTOS's operations, as well as renew our commitment to Making Music's Singing Network.

We continued to strengthen our connections with the ISM, signing their open letters to government about policies affecting music education. Lobbying is an area of work that AOTOS hopes to increase in the future, and we appreciate the role model that ISM provides.

These partnership changes have proved to be not only useful in our membership drive, but also vital in a post-lockdown climate, where singing teachers are losing income - exacerbated by the addition of VAT to Independent School fees - and in which they are less able to pay for CPD and

other events. AOTOS hopes that these partnerships will provide more numerous and more economical ways to serve our community.

With the appointment of a new volunteer with responsibility for Corporate Partnerships, we are looking again to build relationships with these and other organisations within the sector. To this end, we will be exhibiting at the Music and Drama Expo in Feb 2026.

European Voice Teachers Association (EVTA)

The spring 2025 EVTA meeting was attended online by two members of the AOTOS council, with the stimulating discussion focused on the direction of the next Eurovox conference. This relationship was further strengthened through in-person attendance at the EVTA Council meeting, held in September in Milan, Italy. Attending this meeting allowed our Chair to strengthen our position as the second-largest voice teacher association in Europe, second only to the BDG in Germany. Thanks to AOTOS's recent work reassessing our mission, values, and strategy, EVTA was very curious to hear how we have achieved our more outward-facing approach, and were grateful for our advice. AOTOS offered multiple speakers for EVTA's own reform work, and cultivating these face-to-face relationships, enables us to bring our organisations ever closer as we seek to pursue common goals across borders.

7. Membership

At 31 December 2025, we had 587 standard paying members, 22 paying student/graduate members and 16 corporate members.

We also had non-paying members as follows:

5 reciprocal corporates, 5 honorary presidents, 11 honorary life members, 23 emeritus members and 7 associate members.

8. Financial Review

The Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 December 2025 is set out on pages 9 and 10.

Total receipts for the year were £81,905 (2024: £72,258), reflecting strong performance across core activities, particularly the Summer Conference and membership income, together with Gift Aid recovered and increased interest received on deposit funds.

Total payments amounted to £83,913 (2024: £85,112). This resulted in a net excess of payments over receipts of £2,008 (2024: £12,854 deficit).

On 31 December 2025, total funds stood at £86,437 (2024: £88,445). All funds are unrestricted. The Association remains financially stable, with cash reserves held predominantly in deposit accounts to maximise interest income while maintaining liquidity for operational needs.

The trustees are satisfied that the Association continues to operate on a sound financial footing and that resources are being applied in furtherance of its charitable objectives.

9. Reserves Policy

The trustees currently maintain a policy of holding reserves equivalent to approximately one year of expenditure. During the year the trustees reviewed this policy and concluded that the existing benchmark is higher than necessary for the Association's risk profile and operating model.

A revised reserves framework is therefore being developed to align the target level of reserves with essential operational overheads only, reflecting the financial risk exposure of the Association, ensuring funds are not held unnecessarily where they could be applied to further the Association's charitable objectives, and maintain sufficient liquidity to manage timing differences in event income and expenditure.

On 31 December 2025, unrestricted reserves stood at £86,437. While this remains above the anticipated revised target level, it provides stability as the trustees finalise and implement the updated reserves policy. The revised policy will be formally adopted and disclosed in the next reporting period.

The Association also makes provision within its unrestricted funds to support members facing financial hardship through bursaries for membership and events.

10. Public Benefit

The trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance.

The Association advances education in the art and science of singing through conferences, training events, publications, professional development opportunities and member support. The bursary provision further ensures that financial hardship does not prevent participation in the Association's activities.

The trustees are satisfied that the Association's activities during the year have delivered public benefit in accordance with its charitable objects.

Signed by order of the trustees



Pamela Hay, Chair.

2025 Accounts

Association of Teachers of Singing — **Charity Number 1190787**

Receipts and payments Account for the Period from 1 January to 31 December 2025

Funds:			Unrestricted	Restricted	2025 Total	2024 Total
Receipts		Notes	£	£	£	£
Legacies			-	-	-	45.33
Operating Activities	Individual Membership		39,788.81	-	39,788.81	38,984.00
	Corporate Membership		1,277.50	-	1,277.50	-
	Gift Aid Tax Repaid		1,534.97	-	1,534.97	-
	Summer (Annual) Conference		24,903.50	-	24,903.50	20,106.50
	Autumn Conference		3,315.00	-	3,315.00	3,965.00
	Online Events / Area Development Days		2,080.00	-	2,080.00	1,490.00
	Teacher Training (Essentials)		4,155.00	-	4,155.00	5,345.00
	Publications (Magazine) Income		440.00	-	440.00	-
	Designated Funds Income			-	-	-
	Miscellaneous (advertising and donations)		1,242.00	-	1,242.00	620.75
Interest Received			3,168.44	-	3,168.44	1,701.13
Total Receipts			81,905.22	-	81,905.22	72,257.71
Payments						
Charitable Activities	Summer (Annual) Conference		25,614.52		25,614.52	15,519.64
	Autumn Conference		4,295.52		4,295.52	2,115.86
	Magazine and Publications				-	3,514.00
	Online Events / Area Development Days		3,093.82		3,093.82	2,206.60
	Teacher Training (Essentials)		4,324.00		4,324.00	4,676.04
	Ad Hoc Programme Events		819.10		819.10	-
			38,146.96	-	38,146.96	28,032.14
Fundraising Activities	Fundraising / Promotional Events		554.04		554.04	-
Support	Advertising and PR		3,593.73		3,593.73	4,793.16
	Subscriptions		3,425.31		3,425.31	2,450.22
	Sundry	[a]	493.40		493.40	698.80
			7,512.44	-	7,512.44	7,942.18
Management	Meetings Expenses		766.19		766.19	2,097.77
	Accommodation		1,022.41		1,022.41	-
	Travel		1,591.60		1,591.60	3,797.03
	Printing, Stationery and Telephone		147.95		147.95	286.97
	Postage and Carriage		190.96		190.96	153.05
	Administration		20,289.32		20,289.32	19,442.91
	Bookkeeping		7,801.28		7,801.28	5,411.99
	Independent Examination		852.00		852.00	1,008.00

		Unrestricted	Restricted	2025 Total	2024 Total
		£	£	£	£
	Website and Database	3,099.97		3,099.97	13,826.48
	Legal and Professional fees	47.00		47.00	419.00
	Bank Charges	1,115.93		1,115.93	1,039.22
	Insurance	629.21		629.21	1,023.26
	Subsistence	145.84		145.84	-
	Sundry			-	631.58
		37,699.66	-	37,699.66	49,137.26
Total Payments		83,913.10	-	83,913.10	85,111.58
Net Receipts/Payments		(2,007.88)	-	(2,007.88)	(12,853.87)
Transfers between funds					
Net monetary assets at start of period		88,444.95		88,444.95	101,298.82
Net monetary assets at end of period		86,437.07	-	86,437.07	88,444.95

Association of Teachers of Singing

Charity Number
1190787

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2025

Cash funds		31/12/2025	31/12/2024	31/12/2023
	Current accounts	397.90	1,097.44	651.56
	Deposit accounts	85,674.19	86,439.02	99,761.60
	Bursary account	305.24	907.71	381.09
	PayPal account	59.74	0.78	504.57
	Stripe account	-	-	-
	Total cash funds	86,437.07	88,444.95	101,298.82
	Unrestricted funds	86,437.07	88,444.95	101,298.82
	Restricted funds		-	
		86,437.07	88,444.95	101,298.82
Debtors and prepayment				
	Debtors	90.00	-	-
	Prepayments	-	-	-
Liabilities				
	Independent examination accrual	876.00	850.00	-
	Other creditors	4,169.00	1240.00	-

Receipts & Payments Clarifications: [a] Archive storage and bursaries

Trustee Expenses - Note 1:
During the period, 11 Trustees were reimbursed a total of £6,597.60 for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in carrying out their duties.

In addition, three Trustees received honoraria of £250 each in respect of leading a course delivered as part of the Association's charitable activities. These payments were made for services provided beyond their trustee duties, were approved in advance by the Board of Trustees, and were permitted under the Association's governing document.

PAMELA HAY, CHAIR

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of the Association of Teachers of Singing

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Association of Teachers of Singing ("the Charity") for the period ended 31 December 2025, which are set out on pages 9 to 11.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity 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 Charity'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:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by 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 this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Colin Dadswell FCA ACCA DChA

Caladine Limited
Chartered Certified Accountants
Chantry House, 22 Upperton Road
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Date: 16 JULY 2026