Winchester Community Choir

Registered Charity Number 1198281

Trustees Annual Report and Accounts

for the period from 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026

Winchester Community Choir

a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England

Trustees Annual Report for the period from 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026

Charity's name:	Winchester Community Choir
Charity registration number:	1198281
Registered office address:	16 Peninsula Square, Winchester, SO23 8GJ
Email address:	membership@winchestercommunitychoir.com
Website:	https://www.winchestercommunitychoir.com
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank plc., 49 High Street, Winchester, SO23 9BU

Committee Members and Officers serving during the year:

The following trustees and committee members served during the reporting period:

Name	Role	From	Re-elected	Retired
Jim Benson	Trustee	09-Jun-2023		27-Apr-2025
Christel Buis	Co-opted member	18-Jul-2023		05-Sep-2025
Hazel Chenhall	Trustee	17-Mar-2022	30-Apr-2024	31-Dec-2025
Malcolm Hand	Trustee	20-May-2025		
David d'Arcy Hughes	Trustee	17-Mar-2022		
Annette Gibson	Trustee	17-Mar-2022	06-Jun-2023	12-May-2026
Denis Gibson	Trustee	17-Mar-2022	06-Jun-2023	
Neil Lewin	Co-opted member	24-Feb-2026		
Paul Montgomery	Trustee	17-Mar-2022	30-Apr-2024	
Wenda Moroney	Trustee	17-Mar-2022	20-May-2025	
Zack Stephens	In attendance	01-Mar-2023		

The following trustees served as officers of the charity:

Name	Role	From
David d'Arcy Hughes	Chair	07-Jun-2022
Paul Montgomery	Secretary	17-Mar-2022
Wenda Moroney	Treasurer	17-Mar-2022

Chair's Foreword

2025/26 has been dominated by the 20th anniversary of the founding of the choir and a series of activities and events planned to mark this occasion. These are detailed in the Activities and Achievements section of this Report and summarised here.

The programme included the development of an online shop; publications; a choir themed walk; audio and video recording sessions; a ceilidh; a lecture; performances; commissioned music; a workshop and a magnificent final concert. Particular mention must be made of the two spectacular works commissioned for our 20th anniversary, *The River* by Oliver Tarney with lyrics by Lucia Quinault which we sang at our Summer Concert and *Sing for Winchester* by Zack Stephens with lyrics by Iris Gould, performed at our Winter Concert at Winchester College.

An anniversary programme of this size and scope was long in planning and expensive to run and I thank loyal friends of the choir for financial grants and services offered to deliver the programme. I am pleased to report that, at our closing review, the programme delivered a range of popular and enjoyable events and was delivered well within budget.

This year we also engaged Lilly Cunnington, a music student for work experience as Assistant Musical Director. She attends rehearsals and conducts the choir under the guidance of our MD, Zack Stephens. She is paid a small honorarium.

We continued to operate in line with our Charitable Objectives, providing an accessible choir for people local to Winchester, running social events and performances varying from large scale public concerts to small groups entertaining local Hospital patients and we raised some £2000 for two local charities, Read Easy and the Martin Reid Foundation.

On the administrative side, we improved process for accessing sound files for home rehearsing purposes. We are fortunate to have in Denis Gibson a committee member who understands the technicalities of these innovations and keeps up to speed with the latest technological developments.

The choir numbers remain healthy with a good representation across the age groups and as can be seen from the Financial Review at the end of this Report we remain in a healthy state in financial terms and have achieved the targeted level of reserves to guard against future pandemics or other rainy days.

It remains to me to thank most sincerely the committee members listed at the head of this Report and other choir members who assist on an ad hoc basis, our Musical Director Zack Stephens and all those without whom there would be no choir. It takes a huge amount of work to manage a group of 80-odd people, and we are fortunate to be able to call upon such an efficient and cheerful team to undertake it. Their efforts in 2025/26 combined to create a memorable and fitting celebration of our 20 years of singing in Winchester

I can report with confidence that the Winchester Community Choir is flourishing, solvent and in good heart and voice at this time.

David d'Arcy Hughes, Chair of Trustees

Governance

The choir is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and choir members are voting members of the charity.

Winchester Community Choir has a committee comprising the trustees and others in attendance, like the choir's Music Director and any co-opted committee members. The committee is responsible for administering the business of the choir, including arrangements for rehearsals and performances, and the award of grants from moneys raised by the choir's fundraising activities. There are three formal officers of the charity appointed by the trustees: the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Other committee members may be appointed by the committee to perform additional roles, for example the Membership Secretary. The committee met six times during the year.

As required by its constitution, Winchester Community Choir held an Annual General Meeting during the reporting period. The AGM took place on 20 May 2025.

The charity's governing document is a constitution for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation - the association model. The trustees are elected by the members of the charity or appointed by the trustees under clause 13(4) of the constitution.

Winchester Community Choir does not have corporate trustees. It does not own or lease property. It does not act as a custodian of the resources of any other charity.

Objectives

Winchester Community Choir has two charitable purposes. The objectives are:

(1) the advancement of the arts, and in particular the art of choral singing, by providing an accessible community choir for people in Winchester and its surrounding area, by presenting concerts and in such other ways as the choir through its Trustees shall determine from time-to-time.

(2) the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage by raising funds for other charities, nominated by our members and approved by our Trustees.

Delivering public benefit

The trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. They declare that

(1) Any member of the public may join Winchester Community Choir. We do not audition. We offer members opportunities to develop their skills as singers and to maintain their health and wellbeing through participation in community activity.

(2) Our fundraising at public concerts benefits other charities, usually local charities committed to helping people in need because of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage. We give grants to charities nominated by our members and approved by our committee. Since the choir started in 2005, we have made 76 grants totalling £48,513.

Activities and Achievements

We are delighted that Zack Stephens continued to direct the choir in 2025/26. With a view to developing a future generation of choral directors, we appointed Lily Cunnington as **Assistant Music Director** to gain experience of conducting a choir under Zack's supervision. Lily is a young music student. She attends our rehearsals and performances, has conducted one or two songs at our public concerts and receives a small honorarium each term.

2025/26 was dominated by activities, services and events to mark **WCC's 20th anniversary**. A comprehensive programme was planned and an annual planner, highlighting all the services and events, was distributed.

The first event of the programme, a **ceilidh**, which was requested by choir members, was cancelled when ticket sales proved very slow. Fortunately, this did not set a precedent, subsequent events were very well supported.

Choir member and local history buff Elaine Howells led a **walking tour** of central Winchester to sites with choir or musical connections. This popular event was oversubscribed. An informative afternoon was enjoyed by the attendees.

The **Summer concert** was held in the United Church of Winchester on 6th July. *Made in Winchester* was a programme of songs mainly from Winchester and Hampshire, mainly conducted by Zack Stephens. The concert programme included a set of pieces about that most celebrated of birds in music and poetry – the lark. Carolyn Robson soloed the beautiful *Waiting for the Lark* by Bill Chaddick; Zack Stephens on violin and Emi Hallinger (piano) played Vaughan Williams' idyllic *The Lark Ascending*; and we finished the set with *Rise the Lark* by Di Franklin in Carolyn's arrangement for choir. Two commissioned pieces were included, *Sing for Winchester* composed by our MD and *The River*, a song about the Itchen, by Oliver Tarney. Carolyn Robson, former MD of WCC, Freya Tabbush and Moira Craig made guest appearances and Ysanne Bonner, locum MD and friend of the choir, conducted a piece. £1000, the proceeds of a retiring collection and a contribution from ticket sales, was donated in support of Read Easy, a local literacy charity proposed by Iris Gould.

Shortly after the concert the choir gathered at the beautiful St Paul's church for a **video recording session**. Christine Arriens and husband Julian brought the expertise and resources of their video production company SuperReel to this shoot, ably assisted by Dan Gibson. Chris Brown recorded the audio track with his customary expertise. The results can be seen and heard on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@WinchesterCommunityChoir.

With kind permission of Joan Dartnall, a choir member, and her husband Rodney, a **garden party** was held in their beautiful gardens on the banks of the Itchen. With strawberries and sunshine, a good time was had.

Next on the agenda was a visit to Hampshire Records office and their comfortable lecture theatre for an event called ***The Collectors***. There a lucky audience gathered to hear Bob Askew's fascinating talk about George Gardiner's song collection in Hampshire. The lecture was ably illustrated by Bob's acclaimed musical daughters, the Askew Sisters. The lecture and performance were followed by a drink's reception and lively discussions in the HRO reception.

Then it was back to the United Church for a day's **singing workshop** and concert run by the supremely talented quartet, Oaken. There were roughly equal numbers of choir members and visitors who were treated to a very varied workshop programme followed by an equally eclectic concert programme. A great time was had and, unexpectedly, we made a small profit.

The final event of the Anniversary Programme was a Christmas concert, ***Christmas in New Hall***, at Winchester College's beautifully appointed New Hall. The opportunity for the choir to sing in a first-class concert hall was not to be missed and we invited Zack Stephens' other Hampshire choir, the Andover Museum Loft Singers and Carolyn Robson's TakeNOTE Chamber Choir to share the experience. The Mayor of Winchester Sudhakar Achwal and his wife joined an appreciative audience. It was a dynamic and varied programme from three choirs with different styles culminating in a shared performance of *Hail Smiling Morn* which surely raised the roof! A retiring collection for the Martin Reed Foundation, a charity nominated by Denis Gibson supporting young composers, was topped up by the choir to give a donation of £1000.

Other Christmas activities in 2025 included:

(1) A social event, a pizza supper immediately before rehearsal on 9th December, which was enjoyed by large group of singers.
(2) The choir also entertained with Christmas Carols on the evening of 11th December. Cath Hart, a former choir member and friend of WCC, conducted a representative group of choir members at Waitrose and funds were raised for the Winchester Basics Bank.
(3) Later, on 20th December, more carols were sung for in-patients of Hampshire Royal County Hospital. This time singers were directed by Lucy Cunnington, our Assistant MD.

We gave four **premier performances** in our anniversary year. *Moontide* and *Sing for Winchester* by Zack Stephens set poems by choir member Iris Gould. *Walking South* was a setting of a poem by Molly Sexton with music by Zack Stephens. And *The River* was a libretto by Lucia Quinault set by Oliver Tarney, formerly Director of Composition at

Winchester College. *Moontide* inspired a Cornish artist (and daughter of choir member Gill Laily) to produce a beautiful painting. Gill donated two prints of the work which were presented to Zack and Iris. Gill and her daughter also gave rights to reproduce the painting on greetings cards for sale on the choir's on-line store.

Also this year, we launched an **online store** providing an outlet for choir merchandise, print and digital editions of choral arrangements for community choirs. The catalogue of music scores and songbooks on the choir's on-line shop has grown considerably with 50 items available for sale, generating £575 of sales in this accounting period. Most items in the catalogue are arrangements of traditional songs in digital format, each with a score, practice files and lyric sheet. The on-line store was an anniversary-year project to make the work of our music directors, past and present, more widely available. We will widen its scope to include other composers and arrangers who have a connection with the choir or the wider community choir movement. For example, we have begun to upload arrangements by Roger Watson, who did so much to develop and fund community choirs when he was director of the charity Traditional Arts Projects (TAPS). Other items in the on-line catalogue include the choir's anniversary photobook and our Moontide greetings cards.

Another on-line development was a **box office** service embedded in the choir website which replaced more expensive external box office services.

This year we made several refinements to the **practice resources** we offer to our singers:

(1) We produced most sound files using software that generates singing voices directly or indirectly from a music score.
(2) We made the SoundSlice application available to all members. This software shows a cursor moving through a music score or the lyrics of a song as a sound file plays for the singer's part. It allows sections to be looped so that singers can learn through repetition. Fast sections can be slowed to aid learning.
(3) Downloadable scores are available to all singers who want them for all songs in the current repertoire. Previously scores were available only to those who made an additional subscription.

Thanks are due to the many people who worked hard to deliver the anniversary programme and additional events. Many choir members were involved as were a large number of friends of the choir. Without their time, expertise, services and money, this would not have been possible. The anniversary programme was ambitious and expensive to stage. Support from many sources enabled it. Particular thanks are due to the trustees of the **Sarah Morgan Foundation** for their considerable financial support.

The post programme review determined that, after a slight stutter to start, the programme had been a great success. Financially the 'best case' scenario had been exceeded, an excellent result.

Fundraising and grants

The choir's fundraising usually involves two concerts each year with retiring collections in aid of named charities. Grants made as a result of our fundraising efforts are summarised in Table 1.

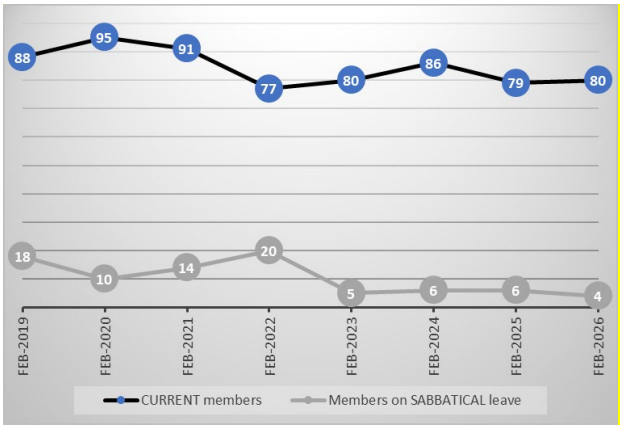
Table 1 Summary of grants to charities

Year	Charity	Type of charity	Grant	Total
Total brought forward from previous years				**£46,415**
2025	ReadEasy	Literacy skills charity	£1,000	
2025	Winchester Basics Bank	Emergency food and clothing charity	£98	
2025	Martin Read Foundation	Support for young composers	£1,000	
Total grants awarded in 2025/26				£2,098
GRAND TOTAL				**£48,513**

Membership

We were delighted to welcome new members who started with us in during 2025/26 and sorry to say 'Farewell' to those who left us. At the end of our financial year, our choir numbered 80 members with 4 people taking sabbatical leave. A time series showing choir membership over the last eight years is in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1 Membership statistics, 2018 to 2026



Financial review

The trustees have prepared Receipts and Payments Accounts for the period from 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026. See pages 8-9. We have used the Charity Commission's optional Form CC16a as a checklist, omitting columns and sections that do not apply to us.

The trustees have reviewed the charity's financial position at the end of the period and wish to highlight the following:

(4) All receipts, payments and cash funds are unrestricted.

(5) We have no endowment funds. There were no asset and investment sales or purchases in the accounting period. We have no other monetary assets, no investment assets and no assets retained for the charity's own use.[1]

(6) The accounts show a deficit of receipts over payments of £962 for the period. This was covered by reserves which stood at £6,907 at the beginning of the year (= cash at the bank totalling £8,202 less liabilities of £1,295).

(7) The trustees plan to have reserves sufficient to cover the liabilities arising in an academic term. They estimated the required reserve to be at least £4,500. Reserves at the end of 2025-26 amount to £5,119 (= net cash funds of £7,240 less liabilities of £2,121). The trustees are satisfied with this level of reserves.

The trustees are of the opinion that Winchester Community Choir is a going concern.

The principal risks facing the charity are not directly of a financial nature but would have financial consequences were they to materialise. The risks are:

(1) the recruitment and retention of choir members. Membership has remained stable for the last year, averaging about 80 members;

(2) the availability of volunteers to administer the business of the charity. We have mitigated this risk by recruiting additional committee members.

[1] 'Assets retained for the charity's own use' would include land and buildings, motor vehicles, office and any specialised equipment, and shares in a charity's non-charitable company. We have none.

(3) the availability of skilled and qualified music director(s) and locums to ensure that rehearsals are always held, and the choir properly prepared for concert performances. We are fortunate in having Zack Stephens in the substantive role and to mitigate any risks we have appointed an Assistant Music Director to provide cover, and we have contacts should other locums be required.

The choir has not received donations of a suspicious nature during this reporting period.

The charity's main expenditure items were as follows:

(1) Music Director fees and venue hire for rehearsals and performances account for 61% of expenditure.

(2) The cost of events was particularly high in a year when we celebrated our 20th anniversary with an ambitious programme. This accounted for 10% of our expenditure.

(3) Grants to other charities accounted for 10% of expenditure.

(4) 7% of payments were the cost of items sold via our on-line store – mainly payments to copyright holders whose sheet music we sell (e.g. the Sarah Morgan Foundation, Carolyn Robson and Zack Stephens). This retail activity makes available to a wider audience, choral arrangements by our music directors past and present. The expenditure is entirely offset by sales income.

(5) 4% of payments are for administrative services that support the choir and its activities. This expenditure includes public liability insurance, printing and stationery, website expenses and music licences.

(6) The remaining 8% of expenditure is a miscellany of payments, the largest of which was a final payment for the commissioning of a new work (*The River*) from Oliver Tarney.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records and for preparing financial statements which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011. The trustees are not obliged by law to commission an independent examination of the accounts but previously had the benefit of Christopher Napier's scrutiny of the accounts. Christopher is a choir member and qualified accountant and gave his services free of charge. He stepped down from this role in 2025. The Charity Commission only requires the independent examination of accounts where a charity's annual income is over £25,000. Consequently, the trustees have decided to forgo an independent examination of accounts in 2025/26.

This Trustees Annual Report was approved by the Trustees and is signed on their behalf by:

_____ _____

David dArcy Hughes Date
Chair of the Trustees

Winchester Community Choir

(registered Charity No.1198281)
Receipts and Payments Account
for the period from 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Last Year £
Receipts			
Membership subscriptions	1	9,495	9,956
Sales	2	7,073	3,581
Gift Aid		1,679	1,793
Miscellaneous income	3	1,286	1,150
Donations	4	1,015	1,250
Bank interest received		31	34
Total receipts		£20,579	£17,764
Payments			
Fees for Music Director		8,639	6,426
Hire of premises	5	4,520	3,873
Event expenses	6	2,184	128
Grants to charities	7	2,098	1,229
Cost of items sold	8	1,455	1,489
Miscellaneous expenditure	9	1,268	750
Stationery, printing & copying		517	163
Gifts and presentations	10	415	895
Licences	11	304	0
Insurance		111	96
IT and software	12	30	359
Total payments		£21,541	£15,408
Surplus/(Deficit)		(962)	2,356
Net cash funds at start of year		8,202	5,846
Net cash funds at year end		£7,240	£8,202

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 28 February 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Last Year £
Cash funds			
Bank current account		2,596	3,585
Bank deposit account		4,644	4,612
PayPal account		0	5
		£7,240	£8,202
Liabilities			
Fees for music director		1,397	1,295
Hire of premises		536	0
Other liabilities	13	188	0
Total liabilities		£2,121	£1,295

The notes referred to above form part of these accounts

Approved by the trustees on 21 April 2026 and signed on their behalf by:

Signature Signature

Wenda Moroney David d'Arcy-Hughes

Notes to the accounts

1 **Membership subscriptions** are net receipts after transaction fees charged by GOCARDLESS which manages Direct Debits for us.

2 **Sales** include receipts from the sale of concert tickests, charges for social events, and other sales made through the choir's on-line e-commerce platform (mainly the sale of songbooks and musical scores on behalf of our music directors past and present). The sales are reported net after transaction fees charged by Wix (our ticketing and e-commerce provider).

3 **Miscellaneous income** includes:

a grant from the Sarah Morgan Foundation for Ace Studio and SoundSlice licences used to produce choir learning resources	£	552
a receipt from Reiver Music for the printing of Carolyn Robson's songbook (*English Folk Songs and Carols*)	£	394
cash floats provided by D Gibson and P Montgomery for sales at the summer and Christmas concerts	£	340
Total miscellaneous income	**£**	**1,286**

4 **Donations** include the amount given in retiring collections at concerts, where the choir (rather than the benefiting charity) is responsible for banking the receipts.

5 **Hire of premises** comprises our ordinary expenditure on the hire of the United Church Winchester for rehearsals and concerts and the hire of other venues for events in our anniversary programme:

Hire of the United Church for rehearsals and our summer concert	£	2,281
Hire of St Paul's Church for recording session	£	195
Hire of the Record Office for *The Collectors* event	£	300
Final payment for the hire of New Hall for our Christmas concert	£	1,744
Total hire of premises	**£**	**4,520**

6 **Event expenses** comprise expenditure on social and other events that are not directly recouped by charging the participants (e.g. drinks at start-of-term socials).

7 **Grants to charities** includes all the donations given in retiring collections that are banked by the choir and which pass through our current bank account. These audience donations are topped up by a contribution from the choir's operating budget.

8 **Cost of items sold** includes expenditure on social events that are charged to members (e.g.supper at The Stable) and payments made to copyright holders of the songbooks, scores and practice resources sold on our on-line e-commerce platform.

9 **Miscellaneous expenditure** comprisess:

Final payment for the commissioning of a new work (The River) from Oliver Tarney	£	750
Purchase of a SumUp card reader	£	53
Reimbursement to D Gibson for providing a cash float at the summer concert	£	190
Reimbursement to P Montgomery for providing a cash float at the Christmas concert	£	150
Refunds of membership subscription	£	118
Bank charges	£	7
Total miscellaneous expenditure	**£**	**1,268**

10 **Gifts and presentations** comprise expenditure on gifts for our MD and performers at concerts. Expenditure is higher than usual this year becauuse of the number of guest performers at our summer concert and thank you gifts to those from whom we commissioned new works.

11 **Licenses** includes licences to copy musical scores and a music licence for our Christmas concert

12 **IT and software** - major costs for our website app and web domain are paid every two years and were not due this year.

13 **Other liabilities** - comprise: unpaid event expenses (£92) and payments due to copyright holders for works sold on our on-line e-commerce platform (£96).