HASTINGS CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The principal objectives of Hastings Chamber Music Festival Trust are to promote, improve, develop, maintain and advance education and the arts for the public benefit, particularly the art of music. The Trust fulfils these objectives principally through the organisation and presentation of the Hastings Chamber Music Festival, alongside related educational and audience-development activities including open rehearsals, talks, conversations with artists and other opportunities for engagement with professional musicians.

The Festival aims to bring high-quality chamber music to audiences in Hastings and the surrounding area, presenting established professional musicians alongside emerging artists and offering programmes that combine well-known repertoire with less familiar and contemporary works.

The Festival also seeks to contribute to the cultural life of Hastings by working with local venues, arts organisations and other community partners, while developing opportunities for audiences to engage more closely with performers and the creative process.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

The 2025 Hastings Chamber Music Festival took place from 23rd to 26th October 2025, presenting four public concerts at Christ Church and Kino Teatr in St Leonards-on-Sea.

The Festival's 2025 programme, themed '**Resounding Nature**', was its most ambitious and varied to date, bringing together repertoire spanning approximately 350 years, from Baroque music to contemporary composition. The programme explored different aspects of humanity's relationship with the natural world, while also addressing themes of transformation, resilience, conflict and the human experience.

The Festival continued its commitment to presenting a mixture of established artists and emerging talent, alongside opportunities for audiences to hear musicians and ensembles working in different musical traditions and formats.

Artistic Activity

The Festival opened at Christ Church with the Felix Ensemble, led by Artistic Director Jane Gordon, with a programme entitled *Metamorphoses & Resilience: A Journey Through Strauss and Shostakovich*. Richard Strauss's *Metamorphosen*, performed in its septet arrangement, was paired with Shostakovich's Piano Quintet. The programme explored themes of transformation, loss and resilience, setting the tone for the Festival's wider theme of *Resounding Nature* and its exploration of the relationship between music and the human experience.

The second concert, at Kino-Teatr, featured The Hermes Experiment in their *Tree* album launch programme. The ensemble, comprising harp, clarinet, voice and double bass, has developed a distinctive repertoire through collaborations with contemporary composers and arrangers. Their programme brought together historical repertoire with new and recent music, demonstrating the Festival's continuing interest in presenting innovative approaches to chamber music and supporting artists whose work reaches beyond conventional repertoire.

At Christ Church, Apollo's Cabinet presented *Elements*, an early-music programme exploring the four classical elements and humanity's impact on the natural world. The programme drew on music by composers including Rebel, Destouches and Delalande, alongside poetry and contemporary material. It provided an opportunity for Hastings audiences to experience historically informed performance alongside new creative work and reflected the Festival's interest in connecting music of the past with contemporary concerns.

The Festival concluded at Kino-Teatr with the Rautio Piano Trio, joined by narrator Oliver Beamish, in *Echoes of the Sea and Soul: A Voyage from Struggle to Triumph*. Sally Beamish's *Seafarer* was paired with Beethoven's *Archduke Trio*. Beamish's work, inspired by the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, brought together voice, narration and piano trio, exploring themes of fate, bravery and mortality. Beethoven's Trio provided a contrasting perspective on human connection and resilience. Sally Beamish also gave a pre-concert talk, offering audiences an insight into the background and creative process behind *Seafarer*.

The four concerts demonstrated the Festival's commitment to presenting a broad range of repertoire and performance styles, from Baroque and historically informed performance through to nineteenth-century chamber music and contemporary composition.

Audience Engagement and Education

Alongside the main concert programme, the Festival continued to develop its programme of Open Rehearsals and Artists in Conversation, providing audiences with opportunities to encounter musicians outside the formal concert setting.

These events form an important part of the Festival's educational aims, giving audiences insight into the preparation and interpretation of musical works and encouraging a more direct relationship between performers and listeners.

The Festival also continued to use pre-concert talks as a means of providing additional context around the repertoire. In 2025, Sally Beamish spoke about *Seafarer* ahead of the Festival's closing concert, allowing audiences to hear directly from the composer about the origins and creative process behind the work.

Audience Development and Marketing

The Festival continued to develop its audience through a combination of local press, social media, printed publicity and reciprocal marketing with arts and cultural organisations across the wider Hastings area.

The Festival maintained a dedicated mailing list of approximately 400 subscribers and continued to encourage participating artists to promote concerts through their own networks. Marketing activity included local press coverage and advertising, distribution

of approximately 1,000 leaflets throughout Hastings, posters at key locations and promotion through local cultural and fringe events in advance of the Festival.

The Festival also benefited from promotional support from Kino Teatr, which has a substantial local mailing list, and from the distribution of publicity materials at Christ Church. These partnerships are important in helping the Festival reach audiences beyond its existing mailing list and established concert-going community.

The Festival's longer-term aim is to continue increasing its visibility across Hastings and the surrounding area and to develop a broader audience for chamber music. Increased investment in local advertising and prominent public-facing publicity will form part of this strategy.

Principal Achievements

A principal achievement of 2025 was the successful delivery of a four-concert Festival presenting a wide-ranging programme of chamber music across several centuries and musical traditions.

The Festival continued to strengthen its artistic identity by combining established performers with younger and emerging artists, historically informed performance with contemporary music, and traditional concert programming with opportunities for audience engagement.

The 2025 programme also enabled the Festival to present work by living composers and to provide audiences with direct access to artists through talks and open rehearsals. This combination of high-quality performance and audience engagement remains central to the Trust's charitable objectives.

Financial Review

The Trustees continued to monitor expenditure carefully, with particular attention to maintaining the artistic quality of the Festival while ensuring that ticket prices remained accessible to local audiences.

The Festival's income is derived from a combination of ticket sales, donations, grants, sponsorship and support from Friends of the Festival. Fundraising and development activity remains important to the Festival's ability to maintain its programme and plan for future growth.

2025 financial information is presented in the following accounts and notes, which also include details of grants, donations and annual surplus.

FUTURE PLANS

Festival Development

The Trustees intend to continue developing the Festival as an important part of the cultural life of Hastings, while maintaining its distinctive artistic identity and commitment to high-quality chamber music.

Future plans include continuing to present a diverse programme spanning different periods and styles, with a balance between established artists, emerging talent, historically informed performance and contemporary music.

Audience development will remain a key priority. The Festival will continue to build its mailing list, strengthen relationships with local arts and cultural organisations and increase its visibility through local advertising, social media and printed publicity. The Trustees aim to increase average concert attendance and broaden the Festival's reach within the wider Hastings community.

The Festival will also continue to develop its programme of open rehearsals, artist conversations and talks, recognising the importance of providing audiences with opportunities to engage with musicians and composers beyond the concert performance itself.

2026 Programme 'Transfiguration'

The 2026 Hastings Chamber Music Festival will take place from 22nd to 25th October, with the theme '**Transfiguration**', inspired by Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* (*Transfigured Night*). The programme will continue the Festival's commitment to presenting ambitious and diverse chamber music, bringing together established professional musicians, emerging artists and historically informed performance.

The four-concert programme will include:

- **Felix Ensemble - *Transfigured Night***: Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and Brahms's Sextet No. 1 in B-flat major.
- **Elmore Quartet - Young Artist Platform**: Haydn, Leo Geyer's *Unfurling*, Frank Bridge's *Londonderry Air* and Ravel's String Quartet.
- **Ensemble Molière**: A programme of French Baroque music performed on period instruments.
- **Rautio Piano Trio & Friends - Festival Finale**: Music by Amy Beach alongside a world premiere by Jan Rautio setting poetry by Anna Akhmatova, performed with soprano Hannah Deans-Williams and clarinettist Steve Williams.

The Festival will also continue its programme of **Artists in Conversation and Open Rehearsals**, providing audiences with opportunities to engage directly with performers and gain insight into the rehearsal and creative process.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Hastings Chamber Music Festival ("the Charity") is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation ("CIO") that has been approved and registered by the Charity Commission.

The Trustees are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity and for ensuring that the Trust operates in accordance with its charitable objectives.

Governing Document

The Charity is governed by its Constitution.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The Trustees are appointed in accordance with the provisions of the charity's Constitution. The Board seeks to maintain an appropriate range of skills and experience to support the effective governance and development of the Festival.

Organisational Structure

The Festival is overseen by the Board of Trustees, with artistic direction provided by Jane Gordon. The Festival operates with a small administrative structure, drawing on professional and voluntary support as required for programming, marketing, fundraising, production and event delivery.

Risk Management

The Trustees regularly review the principal risks facing the charity and take appropriate steps to manage these risks. Particular consideration is given to financial sustainability, audience development, artist and venue costs, ticket income and the successful delivery of the annual Festival.

The Trustees recognise that the Festival's ability to develop its programme depends on maintaining a sustainable balance between earned income, grants, donations and fundraising.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Hastings Chamber Music Festival Trust
Registered Charity No. 1206760
Registered Office: 28 West Hill Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN38 0NB

Trustees:
Nigel Dyer KC – Chair
Andrea Corso – Treasurer
Chris Gordon
Tom Hoffman FCA
Laetitia Yhap

Independent Examiner:
Ian Menzies CA

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE HASTINGS CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL TRUST

This is my report to the trustees of Hastings Chamber Music Festival Trust (HCMFT) on the year ended 31st December 2025.

The HCMFT members are responsible for the preparation of the annual reports. An audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act"). An independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the 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.

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

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

I 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.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025

HASTINGS CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025

INCOME	**2025**	**2024**	**Notes**
Grants and Donations	10,528	4,705	1
Gift Aid	748	1,076	
Hastings Chamber Music Festival Tickets	5,896	5,274	
Total Income	17,172	11,055	
EXPENDITURE			
Artist Fees	- 10,593	- 7,463	
Festival Expenses	- 2,961	- 780	
Other Expenses	- 1,780	- 195	2
Total Expenditure	- 15,334	- 8,438	
NET INCOME	**1,838**	**2,617**	
Net Movement in Funds	1,838	2,617	
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total Funds Brought Forward	2,820	204	3
Total Funds Carried Forward	**4,659**	**2,820**	

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER	**2025**	**2024**	
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash at bank	4,229	2,195	
Debtors	748	1,126	4
	4,977	**3,320**	
Creditors	- 318	- 500	5
NET CURRENT ASSETS	**4,659**	**2,820**	
TOTAL FUNDS	**4,659**	**2,820**	

HASTINGS CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025

1. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

	2025 (£)	2024 (£)
The Chalk Cliff Trust	4,000	
Chamber Music Charity	1,000	
Heringtons LLP	500	
Anonymous donors	5,028	4,705
	10,528	4,705

2. OTHER EXPENSES

	2025 (£)	2024 (£)
Administration	1,500	-
Insurance	114	55
Website Costs	165	72
Eventbrite Fee	-	68
	1,780	195

3. TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD

	2025 (£)	2024 (£)
Cash at Bank at 1st January	2,820	204
Cash at Bank at 31st December	4,659	2,820

For 2024, the opening balance represents the funds remaining from the running of the Hastings Chamber Music Festival prior to its incorporation as a charitable organization (during the period 2017 to 2023). The incorporation was confirmed on the 29th of January 2024.

4. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025 (£)	2024 (£)
Gift Aid Payment	748	1,076
2024 Friend's fee late payment	-	50
	748	1,126

5. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025 (£)	2024 (£)
Artistic Director's Fee		500
PPL/PRS License payment	318	
	318	500

6. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

The total amount of donations received from trustees, without conditions, totalled £135 during both 2024 and 2025.