REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31st August 2026

Charity Name: Brighton Orpheus Choir
Charity registration number: 260887

Contact address: 91 Woodland Avenue, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 6BJ

Trustees:

Hilary Brown - Chair (from 18.10.22)
Valerie Gray - Treasurer (from 25.10.23)
Hilary Woodward - Secretary (from 25.10.23)
Vicki Lywood Last (from 19.10.22 to 31.08.26)
Richard Martini (from 06.11.24)
Elizabeth Whittaker (from 06.11.24 to 22.10.25)
Vera Stiefler Johnson (from 22.10.25 to 31.08.26)

Independent Examiner:

Dr. Marisol Smith
15, Harrington Road
Brighton,
BN1 6RE

Choir web site: www.brightonorpheus.org
E-mail: info@brightonorpheus.org

Charity Structure, Governance and Management.

Brighton Orpheus Choir ("the Choir) is run in accordance with its Constitution, adopted on 19 March 1970 and lodged with the Charity Commission. The Constitution, which is amended from time to time, provides (inter alia):

- The members of the Choir's Managing Committee ("the Committee") are the Trustees of the charity and must be members of the Choir.
- The Committee comprises three officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) who are appointed for one year at the AGM.
- The Constitution provides for at least two but no more than six additional members of the Committee. These members are to be appointed at the AGM and hold office for one year.
- All members of the Committee are eligible for re-election annually.
- The Committee has power to co-opt additional members provided that at any one time the total number of Committee members shall not exceed nine.
- Membership of the Choir is open to anyone aged 16 years or above and who is able to pass an audition.

Activities and Objectives
The objects of the Choir shall be:

1. To advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects by the performance of sacred and secular music and by any other means the Trustees see fit, and
2. to assist charitable institutions.

The Choir achieves the first object through:

- Maintaining an active rehearsal programme that seeks to develop the musical ability and knowledge of all choir members.
- Public performance of musical works to both increase the musical ability of the members and the musical knowledge of the public.

The Choir achieves the second object through:

- Making retiring collections for other charities at the public concerts put on by the Choir.
- Running fund raising events (such as carol singing) for other charities.

The Trustees have paid due regard to Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in deciding what activities the Choir should undertake.

Achievements and Performance

The 2025/26 choir year began on 17th September at The Friends' Meeting House in Ship Street, which continues to be successful venue due to the support we receive from the Meeting House staff, the availability of a high-quality piano, the location of The Friends' Meeting House in the centre of Brighton and its proximity to transport links. We attracted several prospective new members to our Open Rehearsal, many wishing to participate in a performance of Handel's Messiah.

The Choir rehearsed Handel's Messiah for a concert on 6th December at St John's Church Knoyle Road Brighton. The orchestra was the Bellot Ensemble. We received a grant of £1000 from the Postlethwaite Music Foundation. The concert was a great success and was sold out.

A retiring collection was made for The Clock Tower Sanctuary, Brighton.

The Choir sang at Brighton Station on the 17th December to raise money for The Clock Tower Sanctuary, Brighton. The Choir was conducted by our Musical Director, Nicholas Houghton, with approximately 50 choir members attending. The public were generous with donations and appreciative of our singing. Carol singing is a beneficial way of making the public aware of the Choir and its activities and we have leaflets available to give to interested members of the public. After the carol singing, we went to Redroaster (Dome), Brighton for a meal, and presented gifts paid for by donations from Choir members to Nicola Grunberg on her retirement as Accompanist to the Choir. It was a very successful event. We will organise another meal again in December 2026.

For our Spring Concert on 21st March 2026, we performed Poulenc's Gloria and Puccini's Messa di Gloria with organ and The Meantime Brass Collective at St John's Church, Knoyle Road, Brighton. The concert was well attended, and we received very positive feedback. A retiring collection was made for The Martlets Hospice. Volunteers from Martlets attended the concert and collected donations.

Our final concert of the choir year was held on 4th July at All Saints Church, Hove. We performed Haydn's Missa Sancti Nicolai; Rutter's A Sprig of Thyme and Elgar's Songs from the Bavarian Highlands. We were accompanied by a 10-piece orchestra. A retiring collection was made for the charity Food and Friendship, Hove. We were pleased to welcome two of their Trustees to the concert.

Looking back on the achievements of Brighton Orpheus Choir during 2025/26, we have had a successful year. Due to the diligence of Treasurer Val Gray, and Secretary, Hilary Woodward, we continue to have carefully worked out budgets and spending forecasts, and the Constitution and other procedural matters are regularly scrutinised and brought up to date as required. Richard Martini is the Committee's liaison among the three charities that we are currently supporting. The website, on the Making Music Platform, continues to be a great asset. We sell more of our concert tickets online and update photographic images and information easily. Choir members appreciate updates via the website email and are positive about the way the Choir is administered. We are gradually growing a 'Friends of Brighton Orpheus' email list which keeps supporters up to date with upcoming concerts.

Brighton Orpheus Choir was privileged to have Nicola Grunberg as our professional Accompanist for many years until her retirement at the end of 2025. Rachel Fryer became the Choir's new professional Accompanist on 7th January 2026.

Under the leadership of our Musical Director, Nicholas Houghton, the standard of our performances continues to improve. Nicholas Houghton invited some choir members to re-audition at the end of the summer term, thereby allowing him to maintain a good standard amongst singers. He will continue to do this at the end of each choir year, as he sees fit. The Tenor section is currently strong, but the Bass section requires more good singers.

Financial Review 2025-26

(Figures in brackets are for 2024-25)
We have continued to control spending with improved budget planning and review activity to predict and monitor expenditure. Our financial position remains very positive.
The Bank Balance at year end was £25,928 (28,391).

Summary

Total receipts for 2025-26 were £37,276 (39,785) and expenditure £39,740 (30,040), leading to a net deficit of £2,464. This deficit is less than expected; our budget for 2025-26 had been set with an anticipated deficit of £6,450, with the extra expenditure based on the extra donations we had received during 2024-25 leading to extra spending power. Members and Committee should be praised for managing to minimise the deficit.

Income streams

Our more ambitious concert program with instrumental support at all three concerts has attracted a wider membership. Membership has continued to increase this year, with 90 (80) paying members.
Membership subscription continues to be our main source of income, and membership fees were increased in line with inflation. The fee still represents extremely good value, averaging at c£5.25 per session, including three concerts, weekly rehearsals, music scores and a free voice workshop.

Ticket sales have been superb, and we are grateful for the continuing, enthusiastic efforts of our members and friends to sell tickets, bringing in essential income to support our concert program.
Thanks to the superb initiatives and dedication of our Librarian, we have gained income to cover our music hire/purchase costs this year, with an income of £1,000 for sale of no-longer-needed music scores from our extensive on-sale library.

Our Gift Aid claim raised £3,846.02 in refunded tax, with 74 (63) members submitting consent forms this year.

The sale of re-cycled greetings cards to choir members has generated a small amount of further income. During the year we commenced a campaign to utilise the fundraising capabilities of 'EasyFundraising' – an on-line tool which attracts donations from retailers for every purchase made. To date, 30 members/friends have nominated Brighton Orpheus Choir as their chosen beneficiary, and we have received a total of £62.46 in just 4 months. This source of income has the potential to grow; all members and friends are encouraged to download this 'app' and nominate Brighton Orpheus Choir – at no cost to themselves.

We continue to seek additional sources of income through grants and donations, so that the reliance on membership subscriptions is reduced.

Expenditure
The concert accounts continue to present challenges, with staging and venue being the largest fixed costs. To reduce costs for 2026-27 we have decided to hold our third concert without staging at a saving of c£1600.

This year we engaged members of the St. Johns Ambulance who provided First Aid support at all three concerts, an increased cost but worthwhile to ensure safety and support for audiences and performers, in line with our Accident Prevention and Reporting Policy.

Our Independent Examiner for 2025-26 is Dr. Marisol Smith who has very kindly agreed to conduct the Independent Examination of the accounts in a voluntary capacity, thus saving a considerable expenditure for 2026-27. We welcome Dr. Smith to our Orpheus family and are very grateful for this voluntary support.

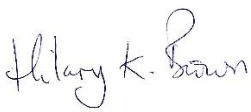
Next year's budget (2026-27)
The Committee has set a cautious budget for 2026-27 with projected income of £38,100 and projected expenditure of £38,312, which would result in a slight deficit of £212.

With anticipated extra income from 'EasyFundraising', increased controls on concert costs, and the continued support of choir members, we are confident we can turn this into an excess of income.

Reserves Policy
Our policy is to maintain sufficient reserves in the general fund to cover the expected deficit at any forthcoming public concerts for the current financial year, together with 12 months of fees for our Musical Director and Accompanist and rehearsal venue costs. This is set at £15,000, which we do currently have.

Prepared by Hilary Brown.

Approved by the Trustees at their meeting on: ……30.09.26…….



Signed: ……06.10.27…… ……. Hilary Brown (Chair)

Receipts and payments account

	2026 (£)	2025 (£)
Receipts		
Income from Charitable Activities		
Member subscriptions	17,932	15,425
Income tax recovered	3,846	4,394
Concert income	13,633	11,179
Legacies and donations	0	8,119
Fundraising	103	108
Other income	1,762	560
Total Receipts	**37,276**	**39,785**
Payments		
Charitable activities		
Concert costs	21,278	11,055
Conductor	6,371	7,781
Accompanist	3,239	3,173
Rehearsal rent	4,452	3,923
Publicity	1,338	1,503
Music purchase/Hire	687	1,083
Other Expenditure/Admin	1,482	630
Transaction/Bank Charges	78	83
Charitable donations	0	0
Making Music Subscriptions and insurance/PRS	815	809
Total Payments	**39,740**	**30,040**
Net Receipts/Payments(-) for the Year	**-2,464**	**9,745**
Cash Funds 1 September (brought forward)	28,391	18,646
Cash Funds 31 August (carried forward)	**25,928**	**28,391**
Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 August	Unrestricted	Unrestricted
Assets – Unity Bank Current Account	25,928	28,391

Signed by the Chair on behalf of the Trustees

Signed Hilary K. Brown

Date 6 October 2026

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF BRIGHTON ORPHEUS CHOIR
(Registered Charity No. 260887)

I report on the accounts of Brighton Orpheus Choir for the year ended 31st August 2026 which are set out on page 5.

Responsibilities of Trustees and Independent Examiner
The charity's trustees 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.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement
My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. The examination included a comprehensive review of the accounting records kept by the charity with a complete set of accounts, banking records and controls obtained for Brighton Orpheus Choir. Verification procedures were undertaken to check a range of items and disclosures in the accounts, and evidence and explanations were sought from the trustees where required.

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:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

Signed by:



Dr. Marisol Smith
15 Harrington Road
Brighton BN16RE

Date: October 6, 2026