**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF GRAVESHAM CHORAL SOCIETY**

**TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21st October 2026**

**AGENDA**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of previous meeting
3. Chairman's report (previously circulated)
4. Treasurer's report (previously circulated)
5. Music Director's report (previously circulated)
6. Vote to accept accounts
7. Election of Officers (vote for any new nominees individually first and those standing again en bloc)

The following Committee members have agreed to stand for a further year:

Officers:

| | |
|---|---|
| Chairman: **Janet Blease** | Proposed by: John MacKenzie<br>Seconded by: Christine Diggens |
| Treasurer: **Anne Streatfeild** | Proposed by: Sheila Buchanan<br>Seconded by: Jill Weinkove |
| Secretary: **Lisa Behague** | Proposed by: Elspeth Southward<br>Seconded by: Steve Doerr |

Committee members:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Kate Feakins** | Proposed by Jacqui O'Connor<br>Seconded by Jan Stopford |
| **Christopher Proudfoot** | Proposed by Mike Hickie<br>Seconded by Neville French |
| **Lynne Rumsey** | Proposed by: John MacKenzie<br>Seconded by: Tony Rumsey |
| **Jane Sparks** | Proposed by: Margaret Endean<br>Seconded by: Doreen Grierson |

[No motions were presented to the meeting.]

8. Any other business

# Gravesham Choral reports for the 2025-2026 season

## Music Director's report

The 2025-2026 season was another hugely successful and enjoyable year for GCS. We started with an uplifting Autumn programme (for St Cecilia's Day), featuring rarely-performed but beautiful French works by Gounod, Bizet and Fauré, ably accompanied by David Poulter on the organ. Feedback from the audience was very positive indeed, especially given these were not particularly well-known works. The Christmas concert was a joy, as always, performed to a sell-out crowd, and we followed this with a Passiontide concert featuring Stainer's *Crucifixion* alongside Wesley's *Ascribe unto the Lord* and Finzi's moving *Lo, the full final sacrifice.* The Finzi was, understandably, a challenge for many members, but one we met head-on, and the resulting performance was extremely impressive and one which you should all be especially proud of! Some members did not enjoy the Stainer as much (it being 'too religious', being the main criticism). I would like to point out here that the majority of choral society repertoire has its foundations in religious music, with many large-scale concert works being derived from religious texts. In an increasingly secular world, we should not be apologetic in putting on such a concert from time-to-time, and whatever type of music we are singing, or singing about, I always say that a huge part of performing is embodying or 'acting out' a character, regardless of our own personal beliefs. (This is a skill I called upon daily, working in Cathedral music!) As MD, I have a nigh-on-impossible task choosing music to please everyone all the time, and I am often showered with negativity, saying things are *too difficult, too new/obscure, in a difficult language,* or that it's *too religious, too secular, too Jazzy, we don't like musicals/opera/gospel music…* (and so on!!) So, the only response to this is to provide an eclectic programme across the year, with hopefully something for everyone! It was a shame that the audience for Stainer was low (perhaps due to the 'old-hat' attitudes surrounding the piece), as the performance was very moving and beautifully done by choir and soloists. I am aware that part of the issue was also other concert clashes that evening, and this is something we are trying to avoid going forward. There is a new online calendar accessible by all Kent choirs where we can all see what others are planning, which will help enormously!

By contrast, our summer concert featuring a hugely diverse array of American-inspired pieces was a triumph, and seemingly a hit with the audience! Again, the Tippett especially was a challenge, but one we pulled off very successfully and was well-worth the effort!

This coming year, we have programmed some more 'mainstream works', with Rossini, Mendelssohn and popular opera choruses, in the hope that these help to draw good audiences, as well as being fulfilling, varied and enjoyable works to perform in their own right. Looking to the future, we hope to have at least one concert a year with (chamber) instrumental accompaniment, which will provide a further boost to our musical experience and added pull for the audience.

As always, I would like to thank all members of the choir for their continued commitment and enthusiasm. I don't by any means take for granted the friendliness, regular attendance, punctuality and extra homework done by many members which makes things run smoothly and enables us to perform at high standards! Rehearsals are always a joy, and it helps me immensely to look forward to rehearsals when I have such a positive response from the choir! Thank you to the enthusiastic and hard-working committee, as well as numerous other volunteers doing a wide-variety of invaluable tasks. This enables me to focus mostly on the music, which is a huge relief! Thank you to our regular accompanist, Debbi Parks, for her uplifting spirit every week, as well as deputy accompanists and conductors who have helped keep the show on the road over the past year, including Erin Sawicka, John Mackenzie and Richard Decker.

With many thanks for all you do, and welcome to those newly-joined! Here's to another enjoyable year of music-making!

**Francesca Massey, MD, Gravesham Choral, September 2026**

**……..**

## Chairman's report

It is my pleasure to present my report for the past year and to reflect on another rewarding and enjoyable season for our Choral Society. Penning this report reminds me how quickly the year passes.

Once again, Gravesham Choral Society has demonstrated the enthusiasm, commitment and musical ability that make it such a valued part of our local music community. Our rehearsals have been well attended, and it has been particularly encouraging to welcome both the many returning members and those who have joined us for the first time.

Over the course of the season, we have worked hard towards our concerts, tackling a varied and stimulating programme of music. It is always a joy to sing old favourites as well as new pieces. The standard of singing has continued to develop, and I would like to thank every member for the time, effort and commitment they have given, both at rehearsals, at home preparation and performances. Preparing a successful concert requires considerable dedication, and the quality of our music making is a reflection of that collective effort.

I would especially like to thank our Music Director, Francesca, for the inspiration, expertise and patience brought to our rehearsals and performances. Her enthusiasm encourages us all to aim higher, while ensuring that our rehearsals remain enjoyable and rewarding. This has led to a growth in confidence that is reflected in our concerts. We are also fortunate that Francesca is a talented organist. Her organ pieces are enjoyed by both choir and audience and add brilliance and variety to our concerts. Our thanks must also go to our accompanists, Debbie and Erin, whose musical contribution and support are invaluable. Debbi's accompaniments to our warm ups always bring a smile to our faces! I am also grateful to our concert soloists and all those who have assisted with performances throughout the year.

A choral society depends on far more than the singers. Behind every concert there are many people, both members and their partners, working quietly and often unseen: committee members, front-of-house volunteers, those involved with publicity and ticket sales, programme preparation, refreshments and the many other practical tasks that enable our concerts to take place. To everyone who has contributed, I offer my sincere thanks. We couldn't do it without you. We have also continued with our fundraising efforts, both for the society and for charity, and this gives everyone the chance to contribute.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of our audience. It is enormously encouraging to perform to an appreciative audience, and their continued support allows the Society to flourish. We are fortunate to have such a strong connection with the local community and members who go the extra mile to publicise our concerts to friends and family.

Looking ahead, Francesca has an exciting programme planned for the coming season. We hope that our members will continue to enjoy the challenge of learning new music and also visiting works that some members have performed before and that our audiences will find plenty to look forward to. We would also welcome new singers, and I encourage members to spread the word among friends, family and colleagues who might enjoy singing with us. We do now have stylish business cards to present to likely candidates!

Finally, I would like to thank all our members for the friendship, enthusiasm and commitment they bring to the Society. Choral singing is, at its heart, a shared activity: individual voices coming together to create something that none of us could achieve alone. That sense of community is one of the great strengths of our Society, and I hope it will continue for many years to come.

Thank you all for your continued support, and I look forward to another successful and enjoyable year of music-making together.

**Jan Blease, Chair, Gravesham Choral, September 2026**

**……..**

## Treasurer's Report
## Year 1st September 2025 to 31st August 2026

It has been another successful year financially, with our net profit increasing from £6,166.38 last year to £6,969.96. This shows that we have well and truly reversed the downward trend that threatened to derail us two or three years ago.

Apart from subscriptions, notable items of income were Gift Aid of £1,952.36, and the interest on our Charity Bank Bond of £1,543.82. We have invested in another Bond which will mature next year. Regarding Gift Aid, if there are any members who have not signed up for this but pay enough tax to do so, please see me for a declaration form! It is a wonderful source of funding for us.

Once again fund raising was a very important part of our revenue, and I think you might be interested in a summary of what we did and how successful it was:

| **Fund Raising** | **Receipts** | **Expenses** | **Net Receipts** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 50 Club | 538.15 | | 538.15 |
| Christmas Stall | 367.96 | 120.00 | 247.96 |
| Whisky raffle | 46.00 | | 46.00 |
| Xmas Quiz | 71.00 | | 71.00 |
| Hamper raffle | 212.00 | | 212.00 |
| Christmas refreshments | 34.60 | 14.40 | 20.20 |
| Sale of donated music scores | 35.41 | | 35.41 |
| CD Quiz | 15.00 | | 15.00 |
| Summer refreshments | 217.47 | 108.92 | 108.55 |
| | | | 0.00 |
| | **1,537.59** | **243.32** | **1,294.27** |

Wasn't that good?!

Our concerts made an overall profit too! If you look at the second sheet of the accounts, you will see that ticket sales for our autumn and summer concerts were very good – unusually, it was not just the Christmas concert that covered its costs.

So, with our Bequest nest egg untouched for the last two years, we are now in a very healthy financial position.

**Anne Streatfeild, Treasurer, Gravesham Choral, October 2026**

Independently Checked: [signature]
Date: 6th October 2026

## GRAVESHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

**Receipts and Payments Account 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026**

| | 2025/26 | 2024/25 |
|---|---|---|
| **INCOME** | | |
| General | | |
| Subscriptions | 11,025.97 | 10,977.08 |
| Friends | 750.00 | 800.00 |
| Fundraising | 1,537.59 | 1,309.58 |
| Other Income (Inc Bank Interest, Gift Aid) | 4,112.80 | 6,470.86 |
| Concert Related | | |
| Tickets | 5,517.70 | 4,953.85 |
| Programmes | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Music Purchase/Hire | 2,160.98 | 1,388.99 |
| Sponsorship | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | 25,105.04 | 25,900.36 |
| | | |
| **EXPENDITURE** | | |
| General | | |
| Admin Costs | 219.60 | 6.80 |
| MD's Rehearsal fees | 4,860.00 | 5,084.00 |
| Accompanist Rehearsal fees | 2,700.00 | 2,556.00 |
| Rehearsal Venue | 1,800.00 | 1,700.00 |
| Fundraising | 243.32 | 0.00 |
| Subscriptions/Insurance/PRS | 808.71 | 788.63 |
| Other Costs | 450.26 | 1,017.46 |
| Concert Related | | |
| Conductor fees | 1,850.00 | 2,200.00 |
| Soloist fees | 1,600.00 | 1,677.20 |
| Orchestra fees | 1,100.00 | 2,400.00 |
| Music Purchase/Hire | 1,601.64 | 1,346.63 |
| Printing/Design/Publicity | 69.55 | 125.26 |
| Instrument Hire/Transport | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Venue Hire/Staging | 832.00 | 832.00 |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURE** | 18,135.08 | 19,733.98 |
| | | |
| **NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS** | **6,969.96** | **6,166.38** |
| | | |
| Bank Accounts & cash at 1 September 2025 | 55,905.49 | |
| | | |
| Bank accounts & cash at 31 August 2026 | **62,875.45** | |

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

| | |
|---|---|
| Monetary Assets | |
| Charity Bank Bond | 40,000.00 |
| Caf Gold Deposit Account | 20,106.10 |
| Caf Cash Current Account | 2,739.30 |
| Cash in hand | 30.05 |
| Total | **62,875.45** |
| | |
| Other Assets (purchase prices) | |
| Keyboard | 1,823.00 |
| Wine glasses & Crates | 188.24 |
| Podium revamp with handrails | 660.00 |
| Music stand | 505.58 |
| SumUp Card Reader | 166.80 |
| | |
| Liabilities | None |