



SHEFFIELD ORATORIO CHORUS

Registered Charity No. 500578

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 July 2025

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**Sheffield Oratorio Chorus
Annual Report and Accounts for Year ended 31 July 2025**

Legal Information

Trustees August 2024 - July 2025

Elected Trustees

Philip Hirst	Chair
Helen Smith	Secretary
Helen Ledger	Treasurer
Lois McGrath	Concert Manager
Lydia Fielder Lord	Singing Representative
<i>Alison Bond</i>	<i>Singing Representative</i>
Hilary Fawcett	Singing Representative

Co-opted Members

Paul Clarke	Making Music Representative to September 2024
Director of Music	Alan East MA ARCO ARCM
Voice Coach	Dr Vivien Pike M Mus GRSM ARMCM LGSM FRSA
Accompanist	Peter Heginbotham

The Director of Music attends and reports to Committee meetings as a non-voting Member.

Registered Charity Number 500578

Principal Address

101 Whirlowdale Road
Millhouses
Sheffield
S7 2NF

Independent Examiner

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

Bank

Natwest Bank plc

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Trustees' report

The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2025. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", issued in March 2005, in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is governed by its constitution adopted 16 September 1970 and amended 3 October 1979, 18 February 1987, 30 September 1992, 13 October 1993, 12 March 1997, 25 June 2003, 8 July 2009, 23 November 2016 and 7 July 2021.

The organisation's finances and policies are administered by the Trustees.

New Trustees are elected for three-year periods at the organisation's annual AGM or a Special General Meeting. The new members are given the information they need, including copies of the Constitution and policies and procedures. The Trustees from time to time may co-opt up to three further members, who attend committee meetings, but are not Trustees unless subsequently elected by the membership. The Trustees who served during the year are listed on page 2 of the report.

Objectives and activities

The main objects of the Chorus are to promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects by the presentation of public concerts and recitals and by such other ways as the Society, through its committee, shall determine from time to time.

Review of activities

The Chorus had an interesting year.

Membership of the Chorus remained relatively stable despite attempts to encourage new members. The committee remains dedicated to trying to increase membership as numbers are still well below what they were before the pandemic.

Attendance at concerts was also lower than expected particularly in relation to the performance of Elijah in April. The committee is working on understanding what attracts audience to our concerts and the barriers that prevent people from attending. It is recognised that this will be due to a number of factors, not least the reduced membership of the choir bringing in fewer supporters.

The Chorus held a successful 'Come and Sing Elijah Choruses' event as part of the Classical Sheffield Weekend when we attracted a large number of non-members to an afternoon sing through in the centre of the city. Feedback from participants was very positive.

A recruitment process was carried out for an Assistant Musical Director to support the Musical Director with the appointment of Timothy Peters to the role from the start of the 2025/26 season. The Committee has taken this step to ensure the sustainability and resilience of the Chorus into the future. We are very excited about the appointment and look forward to welcoming Timothy to rehearsals.

The Chorus was pleased to receive a generous donation from an anonymous benefactor to be used for enhancing the orchestral accompaniment for concerts. This has enabled the engagement of high-quality orchestral forces for the 2025/26 season and beyond.

During the year our Vocal Coach, Dr Vivien Pike, resigned from her position after many years of providing outstanding support to the chorus both as an ensemble and as individual singers. Dr Pike was subsequently elected as an Honorary Vice-President of the Chorus.

Director of Music's Report 2024/25 Season

The 2024/25 season opened with a Remembrance concert in Ecclesall Church; the two works presented were Vaughan Williams Cantata "Dona nobis pacem", (a passionate plea for an end to warfare) given a moving and convincing performance by SOC and soloists Georgie Malcolm and Johannes Moore, and Karl Jenkins' "Requiem", for which we were joined by Froggatt Young Singers. For the Christmas concert also at Ecclesall) we were joined by four young singers from the Sheffield area, and performed the usual mix of choir carols, audience carols and Christmas solos, well performed by SOC and soloists.

For the Spring concert SOC returned to Sheffield Cathedral for a performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah", a one-time crowd-puller and a dramatic and powerful work, given a fine performance by SOC and soloists, Debra Morley, Bethany Horak-Hallett, Timothy Peters and last-minute substitute Alistair Ollerenshaw, the only real disappointment being the size of the audience. For the summer concert, back in Ecclesall SOC held an afternoon Masterclass for young singers under the tutelage of Andrew Randall. This proved to be an informative and enjoyable afternoon. The singers were then invited to sing in the evening concert with SOC supplying some well-known classics as "I was Glad", "Blest pair of Sirens" (also by Parry) and Elgar's "Give unto the Lord".

During the season SOC's vocal coach Vivian Pike retired from her post. SOC is immensely grateful for her expertise and wise tutelage over the past few years. We wish her all the best and congratulate her on her elevation to Vice-President.

The forth-coming season begins with a classic concert of Haydn (Nelson Mass) and Bach's pre-Advent cantata "Sleepers Wake". For the Christmas Concert we are welcoming again the Lodge Moor Children's Choir, who delighted us all three years ago. Alexandra Middleton-Holland is their Conductor. We return to Sheffield Cathedral in March to present Handel's beautiful but rarely heard cantata "The Ways of Zion" and the austere and atmospheric cantata "The Company of Heaven" by Benjamin Britten (2026 is his 50th Memorial Year). We will also be welcoming back the Skipton Camerata for the November concert and the Northern Chamber Orchestra for the March concert.

We welcome a new addition to SOC's musical governance in the shape of Timothy Peters, who becomes assistant Musical Director and we look forward to his input to the season.

Thanks as ever go to Peter Heginbotham, our normal accompanist, Phil Hirst and the committee for their continued support.

Alan East. Musical Director

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Financial Review

This season saw our income remained stable at £40,514 due to consistent member subscriptions and fundraising, unfortunately our ticket sales were disappointingly reduced and our concert income declined from £8,547 to £7,723. We did however receive a restricted grant of £10,000 which we will spend over the next 2 years on orchestral expenses.

Expenditure decreased to £38,422 compared with the previous year's £40,202, careful management on the costs to be incurred enabled us to reduce the costs of Orchestras, venue and music hire. However additional expenses were incurred because of an increase in insurance costs and the need to move a piano from one venue to another.

Reserves policy

We began the year with total reserves of £36,574 and ended with £38,666 to underpin our future activities. The Chorus aims to maintain unrestricted reserves of a minimum of £15,000. This represents a suitable amount to provide the necessary security for booking orchestras, soloists and venues at least a year ahead. The unrestricted reserves at 31 July 2025 were £28,574. See Fund breakdown on page 9 for full details.

Public benefit statement

The trustees of Sheffield Oratorio Chorus take our responsibilities seriously. We are confident that the society's activities meet the public benefit guidance of the Charity Commission, in particular our main object as stated above. Our singing members benefit considerably in terms of improved musical education and mental wellbeing associated with singing with a choir. We offer opportunities to young singers to develop their skills by participating in our concerts as soloists and we welcome audiences to enjoy our music with us.

The Membership fee for the 2024-25 season was at the rate of £160 per year. On the principle that no one should be excluded on grounds of cost, there is always a 50% reduction for members on low incomes.

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Trustees' responsibilities for the financial statements

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period which show the state of affairs of the charity and of net income or expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.
- State whether applicable accounting standards of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable the trustees to prepare the financial statements. The trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 14/1/26 and is signed on their behalf by:



14/1/2026

Phil Hirst
Chair

**Sheffield Oratorio Chorus
Annual Report and Accounts for Year ended 31 July 2025**

Independent Examiner's report to the trustees of Sheffield Oratorio Chorus

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 July 2025 which are set out on pages 8 to 10

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's statement

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.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met ; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

Date:

21/07/2025


Sheffield Oratorio Chorus
Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 July 2025

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
RECEIPTS				
Concert Income				
Ticket Sales - Concerts	7,723		7,723	8,547
Ticket Sales - Workshop			0	0
Programme Sales, Cushion hire, Refreshments	983		983	569
Music & Folder Hire & Sales	1,483		1,483	2,206
Sponsorship & Grants		10,000	10,000	4,089
Subs from Guest Singers	352		352	225
Total Concert Income	10,541	10,000	20,541	15,636
General Income				
Subscriptions from Members	12,654		12,654	12,926
Donations & Bequests	1,936		1,936	2,440
Fundraising	1,313		1,313	4,220
Gift Aid (HMRC Refund)	2,735		2,735	3,486
Bank Interest (COIF account)	1,334		1,334	1,474
Total General Income	19,973	-	19,973	24,546
Total Receipts	30,514	10,000	40,514	40,182
PAYMENTS				
Concert Expenditure				
Orchestras	7,118		7,118	8,269
Concert organists/pianists	1,377		1,377	1,380
Soloists	3,421		3,421	3,173
Concert Conductors	2,372		2,372	2,214
Other concert expenses & equipment	369		369	536
Venue Hire - concerts	3,365		3,365	3,718
Music Hire & Purchase	2,000		2,000	2,777
Publicity, programmes, tickets	1,365		1,365	1,869
Performing Rights fees	287		287	212
Total Concert Expenditure	21,675	-	21,675	24,148
General Expenditure				
Musical Director & Accompanists	10,397		10,397	9,829
Venue Hire - rehearsals	3,860		3,860	4,190
Education Costs			-	-
Publicity - Annual Brochure, website etc	468		468	504
Administration & minor equipment	717		717	402
Fundraising expenses	57		57	206
Accountancy	175		175	175
Gifts & Donations by SOC	373		373	167
Making Music (Annual sub and insurance premium)	700		700	581
Total General Expenditure	16,747	-	16,747	16,054
Total Payments	38,422	-	38,422	40,202
Surplus/Deficit (Net receipts/payments)	(7,908)	10,000	2,092	(20)
Fund balances brought forward 01/08/2024	36,482	92	36,574	36,594
Transfers between funds				
Fund balances carried forward	28,574	10,092	38,666	36,574


Sheffield Oratorio Chorus
Statement of Assets and Liabilities for the year ended 31 July 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
Assets		
Balance at bank		
Current Account	7,483	7,051
Deposit Account (COIF)	30,000	29,000
Cash in hand	<u>1,187</u>	<u>523</u>
Total Assets	<u>38,671</u>	<u>36,574</u>
Liabilities		
		-
		-
Accountancy & Independent Examination	<u>175</u>	<u>175</u>
	<u>175</u>	<u>175</u>
Funds represented by		
General Fund	28,574	36,482
Restricted Funds:		
Grant for concert use	10,000	
Chamber Choir	<u>92</u>	<u>92</u>
	<u>38,666</u>	<u>36,574</u>

This report was approved by the Trustees on 14/1/26 and is signed on their behalf by:


 Phil Hirst
 Chair

14/1/2026


 Helen Ledger
 Treasurer

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Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 July 2025

Receipts and payments accounts

Because the level of income and expenditure is below £250,000 the group has opted for accounts prepared on a receipts and payments basis rather than an accruals basis. This is in line with the Charity Commissioners' guidelines for small charities and is seen as more appropriate for this organisation.

Funds

Unrestricted funds represent funds held for the general purposes of the charity at the trustees' discretion.

Designated funds are part of the unrestricted funds which trustees have earmarked for a particular project or use, without restricting or committing the funds legally. The designation may be cancelled by the trustees if they later decide that the charity should not proceed or continue with the use or project for which the funds were designated.

Restricted funds represent funds which can only be used for particular purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise where the donor specifies or where the funds raised are for a particular restricted purpose.

Restricted funds brought forward to this financial year represented:

Chamber Choir	£92
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At the year-end sums carried forward in restricted funds amounted to:

Concert Orchestras	£10,000
Chamber Choir	£92