

Leeds Festival Chorus

**Annual Report
2023/24 Season**

**Annual Report of the Trustees and
Financial Statements for the
Year ended 31 July 2024
For
LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS**

Registered Charity 517127

LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS

Contents of the Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 July 2024

	Page
Trustees' Annual Report	1
Report of the Independent Examiner	3
Statement of Financial Activities	4
Balance Sheet	5
Notes to the Accounts	6

LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS
Trustees' Annual Report for the Year ended 31 July 2024

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is an unincorporated body governed by its constitution and guidelines issued by the Charity Commission.

Trustees (Executive Committee)

Elected Officers:

Elizabeth Palmer	Acting chair
John Apps (resigned May 2024)	Chairman/Treasurer
James Moxon	Concerts Organiser
Fiona Kirkby	Choir Coordinator

Other trustees in the year were as follows:

Emma Elgie
Chris Foren
Margaret Mara
Judith Scott

The following were appointed as trustees after the year end but before the date of this report:
Will Clarke, Caroline Hedges and Ruth Swanwick.

Appointment and recruitment of Trustees

The executive committee works with the Artistic Advisor (the conductor) to run Leeds Festival Chorus in accordance with the Constitution. The full committee are elected on a three yearly basis at the Annual General Meeting. All Chorus members are encouraged to consider standing.

Legal and Administrative Information

The charity is registered with the Charity Commission Number 517127.

The charity's address is:-
c/o Dr J M Apps
Foxhill Cottage
Weetwood Lane
Leeds
LS16 5PJ

The charity's bankers are:-
CAF Bank Ltd
25 Kings Hill Avenue,
Kings Hill, West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

The charity's independent examiner is:-
Andrew Wilkinson FCA
Malcolm Jones & Co Limited
Accountants and Business Advisors
West Hill House
Allerton Hill
Chapel Allerton
Leeds LS7 3QB

LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS
Trustees' Annual Report for the Year ended 31 July 2024 (cont)

Objects

The objects of the charity are to advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects by any means the trustees see fit, including through the presentation of public events.

Review of Activities and Achievements

The charity achieved its aims in the period under review by continuing to promote and deliver choral concerts. The closure of Leeds Town Hall for refurbishment continued to have a significant effect on concert income. It was noticeable that audience sizes were larger than last year as people were less reluctant to come to public events. We have performed 8 concerts and 1 other event with improved audience sizes.

Reserves Policy

The charity's policy on reserves is to ensure that sufficient unrestricted net current assets (liquid reserves) are maintained to enable the charity to continue for at least the next twelve months in the event that there is an unpredicted and/or significant drop in income levels. The Trustees consider that the current level of liquid reserves (£48,686) is slightly less than 12 months worth of unrestricted ordinary expenditure (£49,439), but roughly equal to the expected expenditure of £46,000 to £50,000 in 2024/25. Accordingly the Trustees will continue to monitor the situation.

Risk management

The Trustees examine the major risks that the charity faces each financial year when considering their plans and annual budgets. The charity has controls in place to control these risks and mitigate any impact they may have on the charity's future.

Public Benefit


The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to guidance published by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit.

Financial Review

The reserves of the charity are both restricted and unrestricted in nature.

As noted in the Reserves policy above, the Trustees are of the opinion that the levels of reserves may not be adequate in exceptional circumstances to meet future expenditure and to fulfil the charity's ongoing aims and objectives. There is a surplus on ordinary activities for the year of £8,018 (2023 - £12,854) which has been added to reserves. The total reserves at the year end amount to £76,455 (2023 - £68,437) of which £10,060 (2023 - £6,079) are restricted.

On behalf of the Trustees


.....
Elizabeth Palmer, Acting Chair

15 October 2024

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 July 2024 which are set out on pages 4 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 period 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 the 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 report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the 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 explanation from you as trustees concerning 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 proper 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.

Andrew Wilkinson FCA
Malcolm Jones & Co Limited
Accountants & Business Advisors
West Hill House
Allerton Hill
Chapel Allerton
Leeds
LS7 3QB

15 October 2024

LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS
Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year ended 31 July 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
				£	£
Incoming resources:					
Voluntary income	6	39,166	5,000	44,166	41,692
Activities for generating funds	8	10,366	-	10,366	9,310
Investment income	9	1,822	-	1,822	537
Incoming resources from charitable activities	10	2,122	-	2,122	2,202
Total incoming resources:		53,476	5,000	58,476	53,741
Resources expended:					
Costs of generating voluntary income	11	492	-	492	266
Fundraising & trading costs	12	42,135	-	42,135	34,017
Charitable activities	13	1,306	168	1,474	1,100
Governance costs	14	5,506	851	6,357	5,504
Total resources expended		49,439	1,019	50,458	40,887
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources on ordinary activities for the year		4,037	3,981	8,018	12,854
Exceptional item		-	-	-	-
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year		4,037	3,981	8,018	12,854
Total charity funds brought forward		62,358	6,079	68,437	55,583
Total charity funds carried forward		66,395	10,060	76,455	68,437

The notes on pages 6 to 10 form part of these accounts.

LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS
Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2024

	Notes	2024	2023	
		£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Tangible assets	2	17,709		19,677
Current Assets				
Other debtors	3	318	264	
Cash at bank and in hand		64,414	68,011	
		64,732	68,275	
Current Liabilities				
Creditors & accrued expenses	4	5,986	19,515	
Net current assets		58,746		48,760
Net assets		76,455	68,437	
Represented by:				
FUNDS				
Restricted income funds:				
Balance at 1 August 2023		6,079		6,079
Net incoming resources for the year		3,981		-
		10,060		6,079
Unrestricted income funds:				
Balance at 1 August 2023		62,358	49,504	
Net incoming resources for the year		4,037	12,854	
		66,395	62,358	
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS	5	76,455	68,437	

Approved by the Trustees

.....
Elizabeth Palmer, Acting Chair

For and on behalf of the Trustees

15 October 2024

The notes on pages 6 to 10 form part of these accounts.

LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS
Notes to the Accounts
for the Year ended 31 July 2024

1. Accounting Policies

General

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities SORP (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

Incoming Resources

All income is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA), when it becomes receivable.

Resources Expended

All resources expended are recognised on an accruals basis, in the period in which they are incurred.

Grants Payable

Grants payable are included in the SOFA when agreed by the Trustees.

Funds Structure Policy

Funds comprise unrestricted income funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the charity's objectives, and restricted funds which are dealt with and presented in accordance with the terms attaching to each separate restricted fund.

Tangible Assets

Tangible assets are capitalised at cost including any incidental expenses of Acquisition. A wear and tear allowance is provided at 10% on a reducing balance basis in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life and reflects the wish of the trustees to account for losses/damage etc. to its music library.

2. Tangible Assets

	Music Library
	£
At valuation	
At 1 August 2023	19,677
Additions in the year	-
Wear and tear provision (10%)	(1,968)
At 31 July 2024	<hr/> 17,709 <hr/>

LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS
Notes to the Accounts
for the Year ended 31 July 2024 (cont)

3. Other debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£

Prepayments	318	264
	318	264

4. Creditors

	2024	2023
	£	£

Accrued expenses	5,986	19,515
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5. Funds

	2023	Movement	2024
	£	£	£

Unrestricted Funds

Music Library	19,677	(1,968)	17,709
General Fund	42,681	6,005	48,686
	62,358	4,037	66,395

Restricted Funds

Chorus Master Scholarship Monies	1,471	(168)	1,303
Music to my Ears	4,608	-	4,608
Future Developments Fund	-	4,149	4,149
	6,079	3,981	10,060

TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS

	68,437	8,018	76,455
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6. Voluntary Income

	Note	2024	2023
		£	£

Members' subscriptions		21,903	21,049
Friends' subscriptions		1,034	1,256
Tax refund on covenanted subscriptions		6,410	6,135
Fundraising and social group		4,354	5,676
Grants, donations and sponsorship	7	8,771	7,076
Legacies	7	1,694	500
		44,166	41,692

LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS
Notes to the Accounts
for the Year ended 31 July 2024 (cont)

7. Grants, donations, sponsorship, patrons and legacies	2024	2023
	£	£
Miscellaneous donations	600	488
Carol Sponsorship	630	1,290
Ticket Donations	909	664
Anonymous donation re Future Development Fund	5,000	-
J Apps	150	150
Olav Arnold Charitable Trust	1,000	1,000
M Beer	300	300
B Brickles	-	50
D Brickles in memory of B Brickles	-	500
J Hartigan in memory of T Hartigan	-	500
N Jones	-	300
L Davies	92	-
I Hall	30	-
J Moxon	-	267
A Smith	-	130
E Walker	60	60
Maurice Wilson in memory of Muriel Wilson	-	1,000
Rev M Winbolt-Lewis	-	300
S Winbolt-Lewis	-	50
S Wright	-	27
	<u>8,771</u>	<u>7,076</u>
Legacies		
J Usher	1,694	-
	<u>10,465</u>	<u>6,857</u>
8. Activities for generating funds	2024	2023
	£	£
Concerts and recitals	<u>10,366</u>	<u>9,310</u>
9. Investment income	2024	2023
	£	£
Bank interest received	<u>1,822</u>	<u>537</u>
10. Incoming resources from charitable activities	2024	2023
	£	£
Library income	<u>2,122</u>	<u>2,202</u>

LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS
Notes to the Accounts
for the Year ended 31 July 2024 (cont)

11. Costs of generating voluntary income	2024	2023
	£	£
Publicity programmes, brochures and advertising	<u>492</u>	<u>266</u>
12. Fundraising & trading costs	2024	2023
	£	£
Hire of music	997	1,039
Concert costs	17,378	10,632
Rehearsal costs	23,760	22,632
	<u>42,135</u>	<u>34,017</u>
13. Charitable activities	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations	<u>1,474</u>	<u>1,100</u>
14. Governance costs	2024	2023
	£	£
Subscriptions and insurance	788	629
Accountancy and Independent Examiner's fee	1,440	1,450
Friends' and patrons' expenses	-	43
Sundry expenses	462	300
Away day for Future Developments	851	-
Website costs and design	-	15
Zoom costs	-	144
Library expenses	684	673
Music storage	-	-
Music wear and tear allowance	1,968	2,186
Bank charges	164	64
	<u>6,357</u>	<u>5,504</u>
15. Trustees Remuneration		
No Trustees or any persons connected with them have received remuneration (2023 – nil).		
16. Trustees Expenses		
Three Trustees (2023 – one) have been reimbursed out of pocket expenses totalling £916 (2023 - £266).		

LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS
Notes to the Accounts
for the Year ended 31 July 2024 (cont)

17. Staff Costs and Emoluments

There were no employees with emoluments in the year (2023 – nil).

18. Cost of Independent Examination

Preparation of accounts and associated costs were £1,450 (2023 - £1,410).

Publicity and Marketing Report 2023-2024

Elizabeth Palmer, Chair of Marketing Group September 2024

Members of the marketing team are: Andrew Smith, Christine Hamill, Emma Elgie, Elizabeth Palmer, Mac Burnell, Mary Magorrian, Richard Wilcocks, and Sally Brown. We are supported by Irene Hall who focuses on the technical side of the website and emails.

Our primary roles and objectives are:

- Publicising and promoting concerts and other events
- Increasing the public profile of the Chorus
- Communicating and engaging with Chorus members
- Attracting new members

What we did in 2023-2024

Publicising and promoting concerts and other events

- Around 450 tickets sold for concerts at St Edmund's Roundhay (figures rounded to nearest 10, excluding Patrons, comps, and donated tickets).
 - Brahms - 100
 - Christmas - 160
 - Rossini - 190
- Used social media (Facebook and Instagram) to publicise events.
- Updating the website to ensure that it remains current and has information on our concerts.
- Produced physical promotional material and distributed across Leeds: annual brochure and flyers for our own concerts.
- Emails to our external mailing list and continued to grow this by asking audience members to sign up when they buy a ticket.

Increasing the public profile of the Chorus

- Building relationships and reciprocal marketing with other musical organisations in Leeds – notably reviving contact with Opera North and Leeds International Concert Series.

Communicating and engaging with Chorus members

- Weekly emails to Chorus members with news and updates.
- Supported with an updated members area to improve the one introduced in 2022 (aiming to launch in October 2024). More detail below.

Attracting new members:

- Developed a recruitment presentation that is displayed at concerts.
- Review of the 'Join Us' page – updated copy to make it more friendly.

Other:

- Started gathering data on how audience members heard about our concerts – chorus members and word of mouth are currently the largest.
- Took on the production of the quarterly newsletters for Friends of LFC.
- Administration of ticket sales through TryBooking.

Updated Members Area - Making Music Platform

We have been working on an updated version of the Members Area to our website using Making Music's Platform service. This will have more features than our current one, and combines several of our current administration areas into one place. Some examples of the features are:

- Events calendar integrated into the website, with the ability to share your availability for concerts and other events. We'll be able to update this if things change, and add information as it becomes available (e.g. dress codes for concerts, or travel arrangements).
- A place for documents and notices.
- Finances - we will be able to take payments for subscriptions through the website.
- Updated member database, making the administration of chorus members' details easier. You'll be able to update your own contact information through the website.

We hope to start using this later this term and will provide more information soon. Thank you to Irene for her hard work on this over the past few months.

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone in the marketing team for their hard work, creative ideas and the time they've given up over this year to make this happen. Also, thank you to everyone in the Chorus who have sold tickets, encouraged people to come, and shared information about our events. If you have any ideas or suggestions about our publicity and marketing, please get in touch with a member of the team or email marketing@leedsfestivalchorus.co.uk.

LEEDS FESTIVAL CHORUS – ANNUAL REPORT FROM LIBRARIAN, 2023-24

Scores for LFC rehearsals and concerts

About 3,700 scores were issued for our rehearsals and performances during the year ended July 2024. About 1,100 of these were hired copies, the remainder being owned by the Chorus. Our own scores included two arrangements by Simon Wright – *The Virgin Mary* and *The Carol Singers* – added with thanks to our stock during the year. The number of non-returns was 14 (0.4% of 3,700). Where possible the cost to the Chorus of these non-returns has been recovered.

Leeds Music Library was again by far the major provider of hire copies. Other hires during the year were from Ampleforth College (again at no charge through Simon's good offices, so with grateful thanks), Bedford Choral Society, Epsom Choral Society, Preston Cecilian Choral Society, and the Wooburn Singers.

Thanks are also due to Peter Bloodworth, Will Clarke and Lloyd Davies who have helped at busy times during the year, or when I have not been available, in issuing, moving and/or sorting scores.

Hiring out scores to other choirs

From December 2023, this part of the Librarian's job has been carried out by Will Clarke. Many thanks are due to him for volunteering and for carrying out this task. It is a task which is very much unseen by members, amounting to half the Librarian's job. It continues to bring in extremely useful income to the Chorus.

32 sets of scores, involving a total of about 1,300 individual scores from our stock of 30,000 or more, were hired out to various choirs nation-wide in the 12 months to July 2024. As last year, on the rare occasions when full sets have not been returned, full recompense or replacement copies have been provided by the hirer. My favourite composers for this year in order of hire-out value are (1) Handel, (2) Poulenc, (3) Rossini.

Clean-up project

In September 2023, I initiated a project to erase the pencil markings that numerous scores in our stock have accumulated over the years. Some 1,100 of the most used scores have had this welcome treatment up to July 2024. The contributions of Peter Bloodworth and Avril Brown, whose labours between them accounted for over half of the 1,100, are particularly appreciated. But every single contribution is welcomed, small or large. The task continues in the 2024-25 season, and further volunteers will be very welcome (usually without deadlines!).

Further thanks

As ever, I am grateful to the many members who sign the sign-up sheets legibly, on the correct line, and return scores promptly. The latter is particularly important when I have to return hired scores within deadlines which are often tight in order to minimise costs. Do please continue.

Mike Croft
Librarian

An innovation this year is that we have put in place voice section representatives in the four main parts of the choir. They are at present Michèle Jackson – soprano, Judy Farnill – alto, Peter Coltman – tenor, David Hall – bass. They should be the first port of call for any queries you have about rehearsals and concerts and importantly are the first contact point for newly auditioned members. They are also happy to receive feedback from members to pass on to the trustees.

CHOIR MEMBERSHIP

We started this new season with 109 members. Over the course of this past year the following have left the choir.

Sopranos	Altos	Tenor	Bass
Harriet Chauhan	Catherine Dickinson	Steve Clarke	Stuart Archbold
Shona Emmett		Tim Swanwick	Lloyd Davies
Emma Mitchell			Steve Maxwell
Nicki Spencer			
Helen Whale			

Whether they have been with us two or twenty years they have all made a contribution to the choir. In particular Steve Maxwell has served as Treasurer, Lloyd Davies has regularly helped Mike Croft with the library, and Stuart Archbold has worked hard and effectively with raising sponsorship for the choir as well as being a generous benefactor himself. We thank them for their contribution to our musical activities and wish them all the best. I hope that we shall see those still living locally, at future concerts.

RECRUITMENT

Our open evening last season was on September 27th. It very much benefitted from the Come and Sing Fauré Requiem held earlier in the month which boosted the numbers of people coming to try us out. This year most new members were recruited either as a result of the open evening or at the start of 2024 – the Christmas concert at St Edmund's also bringing some singers in. Over the year we have had approaches from 19 potential members and all 13 that came forward for audition were successful. Not all have been able to stay with us but those who have are named below.

SOPRANO	ALTO	TENOR	BASS
Monta Drozdova	Judy Farnill	Martin Kettlewell	Sam Boobier
Helen Kettlewell	Deirdre Thackray		Will Clarke
Amber Stamford			David Hargreaves

TRIENNIAL AUDITIONS

These took place in July of this year. Thank you to everyone who came. There were a few members who had to come in September but they have all now completed their auditions leaving only a couple whose health issues preclude them from auditioning at the moment. Thank you to everyone who helped make the auditions run smoothly particularly members who acted as stewards and those who provided half-time catering!

CONCERTS

October 2023 Leeds	69%	79/114
November 2023 Glasgow	67%	76/114
December 2032 Leeds	78%	89/114
February 2023 York	68%	78/114
May 2023 Leeds	80%	92/115
May/June 2023 Spain	47%	53/112

Concert participation has been very variable with the highest number being for the very well received Rossini concert in May. Perhaps understandably concerts away from Leeds show lesser participation.

REHEARSALS and VENUES

St Chad's and St Columba's have, as previously, been our usual venues and we appreciate the use of these places. We have had 42 rehearsals this year in these two venues and in the main they have been well attended. We do encourage members to come to rehearsals for all concerts even those that they are not able to sing as it is good to learn the repertoire and keep voices in trim.

AND FINALLY

As many of you know this has been a rather difficult year for me personally and so I have really appreciated the help, concern and support given to me. It is a testament to the sort of organisation we are. Thank you to you all but in particular Andrew Smith for taking on duties at the church and Siân Moxon who has undertaken extra duties at concerts and rehearsals when I have been absent.

Thank you to Simon and Rebecca as always but definitely in this audition year for their unfailing courtesy and professionalism. It is much appreciated.

Fiona Kirkby - LFC Choir Co-ordinator

Friends of Leeds Festival Chorus

Report 1st October 2023 to 30th September 2024

This is the last report I will be writing as Friends Coordinator as I am relinquishing the post after the 2024 AGM.

I took on the role in March 2020 after the untimely death of Rowena Macdonald. At that time, we had around 65 Friends on the books although I am not sure how many were active. In October 2023 there were still 55 listed but only 35 actually paid a subscription. Many of these also made an extra contribution for which we are most grateful. In all we received around £1100 in contributions from Friends in the 2023-24 season. The Friends also form our largest group of supporters, and many do attend our concerts.

Why have numbers fallen? This has been a trend for some time. In 2016 the Coordinator then, Geoff Smith, noted we had 100 Friends. In 2019, we had around 65. I'm sure Covid Lockdown and closure of the Town Hall have contributed to this further decline.

Since I became Coordinator, I have not had the opportunity to meet Friends regularly at concerts. Our concert in March 2020, Elijah, was cancelled at short notice and apart from the Mahler concert in October 2021 we have not sung in the Town Hall. Thus, most of the benefits of being a Friend of LFC have disappeared. Attempts at setting up a separate 'Chairman's Bar' in St Edmund's or the York Barbican have not succeeded because of lack of appropriate space; there are no complimentary drinks or programmes; there are no benefits for ticket purchase. It is not surprising therefore that numbers have fallen and fewer ex members are becoming Friends. The same applies to Patrons, who's numbers have also fallen. I hope my successor can reverse this trend in the near future when we return to the Town Hall.

It may also be that Friends and Patrons are no longer attracted by what we offer. Some have expressed their dislike of the present venues, some of the programming. We should consider surveying them to ask what they would like from us.

The Friends continue to receive a quarterly newsletter giving information about concerts and LFC events. I am most grateful to Sally Brown and other members of the Marketing team for taking over production of the

Newsletter recently. A big improvement on my efforts. Recently the letter has contained a reflection on membership of the Chorus from a distinguished longstanding member. Others are to follow and I hope you can access these on the Chorus website.

I wish my successor best wishes in the role of Coordinator and I will be happy to assist in the handover.

John Apps

Friends' Coordinator.

friends@leedsfestivalchorus.co.uk

Concert Organiser's Report 2023-24

We began the year at St.Edmund's in October singing the **Brahms Requiem** (with 2 pianists) and the **Liebeslieder Waltzes**. The music was beautiful but sadly audience numbers were down, hampered partly by the stormy weather (storm Babet) and a clash with the Rugby World Cup semi-final.

In November we travelled to Glasgow for a successful collaboration with the City of Glasgow Chorus and the Scottish Opera Orchestra singing the **Verdi Requiem** to great acclaim in the magnificent Glasgow Royal Concert Hall under the baton of Paul Keohone.

This was followed by another well attended **Christmas Concert** at St.Edmund's where we were joined again by Naomi Simon as soloist and also by The Leeds Youth Singers.

In February we returned to the Barbican in York for another collaboration with the York Guildhall Orchestra, conducted by Simon, where we sang **Parry's Blest Pair of Sirens** and **Mendelssohn's Die Erste Valpurgisnacht** in a programme also including Elgar's Enigma Variations. This was also the first time we had sung in a concert there on a Sunday afternoon. Audience numbers were reasonable though a little lower than hoped for.

On May 11th we returned to St.Edmund's and had an excellent audience for our **Rossini Petite Messe Solennelle** with piano (Rebecca Taylor) and accordion (Ben De Souza) and four fabulous soloists. Feedback following the concert was exceptionally good, even the soloists unanimously commenting on how good the chorus had sounded. In part this may have been due to the longer run up to this concert which allowed Simon to spend more time on the detail and left many members commenting on how well prepared they felt which seems to have been reflected well in our performance. A good lesson to take forward.

Tour to Spain

At the end of May those who could set off to Northern Spain for a very successful and enjoyable Tour to Burgos, Salamanca and Valladolid. The venues were all spectacular and well supported by appreciative local audiences. With a trip to Avila, a selection of walking tours and a visit to a winery among the other attractions there was much to appreciate. Special thanks to Harriet Carlyle for her persistence and forbearance over several years in making this happen, to Emma Hammond for bravely and expertly introducing our concerts in fluent Spanish and to Simon and Rebecca for preparing, guiding and playing for us with their usual exemplary professionalism.

2024-5 Season

On 7th September we hosted a Come and Sing '**Choruses from Mendelssohn's *Elijah***' event at Leeds Art Gallery. More than 50 guest singers joined approximately 45 LFC members to (re)learn and sing, under Simon's patient and skilful tutelage, a selection of choruses from this epic work in the famous 'Tiled Hall' Café as part of the Leeds Heritage Open Days. Many thanks to Margaret Mara for arranging and organising what was a challenging event, particularly due to a late change in venue, and for everyone who helped on the day.

On 12th October we travel to Beverley Minster for a 'Choral Soirée' featuring the **Durufié *Requiem*, Gregorien *Motets* and Notre Père, Poulenc's *Penitential Motets* and Messiaen's *O sacrum convivium*.**

On 14th December we return to St.Edmund's for another **Christmas Concert** with Simon conducting and this time featuring Bernard Robertson on organ and piano and Sebastian Williman on trumpet. We have invited the Leeds Youth Singers to join us again (not yet confirmed).

On 21st December we will be singing a selection of **Carols** at **Fountains Abbey** from 2-3pm.

Due to the ongoing difficulties with finding suitable venues while the Town Hall remains closed, the schedule for 2025 is not yet confirmed. However, we are working on several exciting options and hope to be able to confirm more events in the near future.

Please accept my apologies for the uncertainty around next year's programme but hopefully it will be worth the wait.

The latest news on the Town Hall is that the contract for works on the Leeds Town Hall refurbishment project is due to finish in January 2026. That is, of course, no guarantee that it will be open for concerts immediately afterwards but it is at least a step in the right direction.

My particular thanks this year go again to Siân M for managing our St.Edmund's concerts with her usual efficiency and skill and for all the help and guidance she gives me through the year and also to Margaret Mara for continuing her work to provide exciting new opportunities for the chorus.

James Moxon
Concert Organiser

FUND RAISING AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (FRASC) REPORT September 2024

FRASC has taken a bit of a back seat this year in favour of all the organisation required around the summer tour to Spain. Nonetheless, some fundraising activities have taken place throughout the year, thanks to the brilliant FRASC team, and we have donated around **£3,400** to the chorus.

We kicked off with the traditional post-rehearsal **Christmas Bring and Buy sale**. With post-sale purchases inside and outside the chorus, we made over £1,000! Thanks to everyone who baked, bottled and donated lovely Christmas gifts, with special thanks to Fiona Kirkby, who raised around £160 from her Christmas puddings (and homemade mincemeat) alone. Shout outs also for the 2nd hand bookshop, sales and bar teams, and those that set up their own stalls. Particular thanks to Irene Hall, who generously donated all the proceeds of her tablet stall to the chorus. This was the first time that I had been away for the Bring and Buy sale for many years, but Siân Lomax ably stepped as chief coordinator on the day. Thank you, Siân!

There will be a repeat performance this year on Wednesday 27th November, so please dust down your mixing bowls and jam pans and get your baking and making hats on.....and if you have friends or family that would like a stall, let me know.

Other fundraising and social activities have quietly continued through the year. The FRASC **weekly raffle** so efficiently managed by Margaret Whaley has raised just over £900, whilst Chris Short's occasional music sales have also added to the coffers.

In June, Ken and Judith Beaty **opened their stunning garden** just outside Rawdon to the chorus and their friends and families. A beautiful garden on a beautiful day with a delicious afternoon tea organised by Margaret Mara and June Apps – what a great way to spend a summer's afternoon! Not only that, but Margaret's ticket sales raised a fantastic £780 for the chorus.

Wine evenings (pop-up bar) after rehearsals at St Chad's have continued with some this year at the request of people celebrating milestone birthdays or chorus membership anniversaries. Celebrating these has proved very popular with everyone! Thanks also to Simon for buying a (very large) round at the end of term! It would be great if more people could help us with these pop-up bars, so if you think two or three of you could band together and run a wine evening, please let me or any of FRASC know. It's very easy and a great way to meet other chorus members.

FRASC and an excellent team of "clapping section" volunteers also run the **interval bar at the St Edmund's concerts**, allowing us to raise between £200 and £400 each time.

Finally, to **Spain**. Although the intention was for the tour to break even, income was greater than expected as more people joined the tour than had been anticipated when the budget was set. The surplus was used to pay Simon and Rebecca's fees and allowances whilst on tour, which would otherwise have been underwritten by the chorus. So, fundraising of a sort and perhaps making up for not having a big summer fund raiser this year.

Also on the subject of Spain, a huge thank to Emma Hammond (Slater) for her fabulous series of pre-rehearsal **Spanish lessons**. We all enjoyed them enormously and I for one will never forget how to order a black tea with hot water and cold milk on the side!! Not only that, but Emma raised £400 for chorus funds in the process.

Siân Lomax also contributed to the coffers by organising **tour T-shirts and polo shirts**, which were enthusiastically taken up by those travelling to Spain. She will be arranging LFC hoodies and sweatshirts this term, so watch out for announcements from Siân!

As I mentioned in last year's report, FRASC's focus has been on fundraising rather than social events. This is because active FRASC members are comparatively few in number and partly because we perceive there to be limited interest from the choir in social events outside rehearsals. If this isn't the case and you have some great ideas for social events (or fundraisers) and would be happy to help us organise them, then please let us know.

In any case, we would love for more people to join the team. Our meetings are usually fun (nothing to do with the chat, drinks and good food, of course!). If you would like to join us, helping to raise funds for the chorus and maybe get back to organising social events, then please have a chat with me or anyone in the brilliant FRASC team: Fiona Kirkby (executive chef), Margaret Whaley (long-suffering treasurer), Siân Lomax, Heather Newton and Julie Tomkins.

Harriet Carlyle

FRASC Chair

