

National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT

for the financial year ended 31 March 2023

The directors present their Directors' Annual Report, combining the Directors' Report and Trustees' Report, and the unaudited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 March 2023.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The Directors' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Directors' Annual Report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines. The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company's constitution are known as members of the board of trustees.

In this report the directors of National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland present a summary of its purpose, governance, activities, achievements and finances for the financial year 31 March 2023.

The company is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and, although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS 102, the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

Principal Activities

The principal activity of the company is to establish and maintain the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland (NYCNI) and promote the highest standard of choral singing and vocal skills among young people of Northern Ireland.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The directors and the Administration Manager have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those relating to the operations and finances of the company and have put in place a risk management plan to mitigate any exposure to those risks.

Reference and Administrative details

The company, limited by guarantee and not having a share capital, was incorporated on 12 January 1999 and has a charitable status - ref XR29957. The company number is NI035447. Its principal and registered office is Millennium Court Arts Centre, William Street, Portadown, BT63 3NX. The company is registered with the Charity Commission Northern Ireland NIC 100542.

Directors

The directors who served throughout the financial year, except as noted, were as follows:

Eibhlís Farrell
Heather Graham (Resigned 30 November 2022)
Gillian Greenfield
Paul Mulholland
Graeme Stewart
Catherine Dalzell
Ethel Ruddock (Resigned 12 December 2022)
Amy Bennington
Darren Canmore (Resigned 12 December 2022)

The secretaries who served during the financial year were:

Gillian Greenfield (Appointed 29 June 2022)
Shane Farren (Resigned 29 June 2022)

Objectives and activities

The main objective of the charity is to promote the study and practice of choral music in order to foster public knowledge and appreciation of such music by the presentation of concerts and other activities for the people in Northern Ireland.

The activities undertaken during the year by NYCNI included school workshops, residential music courses, master classes and concerts.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance

In the 12 month period to 31 March 2023 NYCNI artistic activity fully recovered after the restrictions in the previous two years caused by the public health situation.

In April 2022 forty-six girls attended the Girls' Choir three day course, directed by Andrew Nunn, culminating in a short concert. This Easter course had been introduced last year as an on-line course and is intended to become an annual event. The Girls' Choir is a bridging ensemble between the junior and training choirs, offering a further performance opportunity for the choir members.

In July 2022 NYCNI delivered three choral courses at Campbell College. A total of 208 young singers attended. The senior and training choir courses were led by Artistic Director Andrew Nunn while the junior choir was conducted by Alison McNeill. The Senior and Training Choir courses were both for seven days and were residential, while the Junior Choir was for five days and non-residential. Each course finished with a concert. The Junior and Training Choir concerts took place in Campbell College while the Senior Choir concert was in St George's Church in Belfast. These performances were recorded and released as short videos on the charity's website and social media channels. The Senior Choir also performed a lunchtime recital in Dublin on 2 August. The Junior Choir carried out a series of "flash-mob" performances at various venues in Belfast on 6 August.

Between October 2022 and March 2023 NYCNI delivered school workshops and open audition sessions across Northern Ireland for the 2023 summer courses and the Girl's Choir Easter course, all led by Andrew Nunn.

Workshops and open auditions were also held for an exciting new development, the NYCNI Boys Choir. For the first time, this choir is for primary school children and will give younger boys the opportunity to experience choral singing. It is hoped that this choir will also act as a feeder into the Junior Choir. Alison McNeill led the workshops and auditions and will lead the four day course at Easter 2023.

The AGM was held on 12 December 2022. Six full board meetings were held during the during the year.

Following a tender process Forefront Consulting prepared a Strategic Plan for NYCNI covering the period 2023 - 2025. This set out a number of strategic objectives for the company and a delivery timeframe. Central to that delivery was the appointment of a part time Chief Executive to lead the implementation of the strategy. In January 2023, Alice Kennelly was appointed to the role.

Financial Results

The results are set out on pages 9 and 10. NYCNI had a net outgoing resource for the 12 month financial period to 31 March 2023 of £13,611. This loss was partly due to the one-off cost of the strategic plan preparation. It was also partly caused by a Board decision to invest in the appointment of a Chief Executive. The company had built up some reserves and the Board decided to spend some of these reserves in funding the Chief Executive's salary for the first year, in the expectation that new funding will be obtained to enable the role to continue. As a result of this decision, the Directors budgeted the company to have a significant loss in the year to 31 March 2024 but to retain adequate reserves at that year end date. However, as outlined in note 16 to the accounts, unforeseen issues have caused the loss for the year to 31 March 2024 to increase significantly with a consequent impact on the expected reserves of the company at that date.

Compliance with Sector-Wide Legislation and Standards

The company engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

- The Companies Act 20016
- The Charities SORP (FRS102)

Reserves Policy

The Directors' policy in relation to unrestricted reserves is to maintain a level of reserves to protect the company against unexpected additional costs or reductions in income. The Directors consider that an appropriate level is around six months recurring expenditure. At the year-end unrestricted reserves were £66,357, which the Directors consider satisfactory.

Structure, Governance and Management Organisational Structure

The National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland (NYCNI) is governed by a Board of Directors which delegates responsibility for the administrative and artistic running of the company to a Chief Executive with administrative support and an Artistic Director.

During the annual courses, NYCNI also engages the services of conductors, a team of section coaches for sopranos, contraltos, tenors and basses, vocal tutors as well as a team of welfare personnel.

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Governing Document

The company is limited by guarantee, not having a share capital. It is registered in Northern Ireland (registration number NI035447) and has obtained charitable status with Charity Commission Northern Ireland (reference number 100542). It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Recruitment and Appointment of Directors

New directors have an induction meeting with the Chair of the Board. They are briefed on a range of issues including a full introduction to the organisation, its decision-making process, its business plan and its recent financial performance and the roles and responsibilities of a Board Member.

Special Provisions relating to small companies

The above report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 5 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Paul F Mulholland
Paul Mulholland
Director