

# CITY OF DERRY INTERNATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL LIMITED

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024

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The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 30 April 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "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) (effective 1 January 2019)".

#### **Objectives and activities**

The City of Derry International Choir Festival Limited is a not for profit organisation. The charity promotes the public performance of classical music, in particular through annual festival - the City of Derry International Choral Festival that celebrates music making by choirs and involves local, national and international participants in concerts, competitions, workshops and community performances across the city of Derry.

First held in 2013, the City of Derry International Choir Festival is now established as a major event in the musical life of Northern Ireland and as the only international choir festival of its kind in the UK. Conceived as a joyous celebration of all that choral singing has to offer, its activities include concerts by world-renowned vocal groups, competitions for choirs, workshops and educational events for singers and conductors, and community concerts and choral trails in landmark locations across Derry and the surrounding area.

The festival welcomes more than 60 choirs each year and recent festivals have welcomed groups from Belarus, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Scotland, Slovenia, Sweden and Wales. Choirs range from local and school groups to vocal ensembles, adult, community and gospel choirs. Internationally acclaimed professional groups featuring in our guest concerts have included The Sixteen, The King's Singers, Tenebrae, The Real Group, VOCES8, SLIXS, the Swingle Singers and the Marian Consort. The inclusion of such outstanding artists is a benchmark of the event's high artistic quality.

#### **Mission:**

We promote and develop choral music in a local, national and international context, driving excellence, community and audience engagement, and personal fulfilment through singing.

#### **Vision:**

To inspire by our work a love and appreciation for choral singing in present and future generations.

#### **Values:**

Excellence: we deliver the highest quality experience in everything we do

Integrity: we carry out all of our work with the greatest responsibility and accountability

Creativity: we instil our work with imagination and innovation

Collegiality: we ensure openness, trust and respect in all our working relationships

Diversity: we capitalise on the richness inherent in differences

In association with these events we promote educational programmes for schools and occasionally for advanced level students, programmes to encourage community music making and concert tours in Northern Ireland, across Ireland and in the UK.

The benefit that flows from our purpose is the promotion of enjoyment, better understanding and appreciation of the art and science of choral music in all its many forms, and including on occasion other musical forms that are related to or are also readily appreciated by audiences. We do this for the general public in Northern Ireland, involving the public as audience members or as active participants in music making.

We can evidence the benefits of our work through regular evaluation and audience survey of all our events, including qualitative analysis of audience and participant response, through photo, video and recorded documentation, peer review, and regular reporting through annual reports, audit and reports to funders. We can think of no obvious possibility of harm arising from our activities, which are subject to risk assessment, the necessary safety and protection policies and codes of conduct for staff and volunteers.

# CITY OF DERRY INTERNATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL LIMITED

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024

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#### *Public benefit*

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

#### *Activities*

The charity affirms its belief in and commitment to:

- establishing an annual, 5-day joyous celebration of choral music in a fun, encouraging atmosphere,
- promoting and developing choral music in the city of Derry, throughout its schools and on a national and international level,
- creating a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere for participation in choral activities in a competitive and non-competitive environment,
- encouraging and supporting a love of choral music and creating inspiring experiences for all involved,
- providing access to internationally renowned choirs and conductors,
- creating a platform for the composition and performance of new choral music,
- providing performance opportunities across a wide range of ages, encouraging the development of choral singing from primary age and above,
- providing performance opportunities for a wide range of musical styles, ensembles and nationalities,
- developing the standard of choral singing through high-quality training of choral directors,
- broadening participating choirs and audience's exposure to a wider range of choral music,
- creating international exchanges and links,
- establishing the festival on the international circuit of choral festivals,
- establishing a legacy.

The City of Derry International Choir Festival aims to invite high-quality choral groups who are enthusiastic about choral music and have a love for sharing performances, singing with others and learning from professional practitioners.

The festival aims to inspire choral ensembles to further their singing skills and take away a lasting impression of the city of Derry with a desire to return in the future and participate again.

#### **Achievements and performance**

##### *Significant activities and achievements against objectives*

The City of Derry International Choir Festival took place 18th-22nd October 2023, being the 11th edition and the 10th anniversary from the first event held in 2013. The event was highly successful, attracting 20,000+ audience, 4,145 participants (80 choirs) bringing 2,500+ bed nights to the city, with 91 events taking place in 44 venues across the city and region.

Our digital programme continued with a broadcast performance of the Cranberries anthem Dreams, performed as part of a Derry Girls themed event in Guildhall Square by a choir of 100 post-primary choristers from local schools.

##### Highlights included:

- Opening gala concert with Festival Chorus and Ulster Orchestra, featuring Giuseppe Verdi's *Messa Da Requiem*
- Guest concert by The Sixteen in the Guildhall
- A full programme of schools, national and international competitions, with seven international choirs from Czech Republic, England, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Poland and Switzerland competing for the international Oak Tree of Derry trophy, won by Maska Mixed Choir from Latvia
- Primary school day with 20 school choirs participating
- City-wide community programme with family workshops and mass participation event, community concerts, plus choral and sacred trails across the city
- On-line Symposium to discuss engagement and social bonds through singing, with an international panel of contributors
- A new commission by Codetta from Anders Edenroth for mixed choir
- A conducting workshop, led by the Finnish choral director, Kari Turunen.

# CITY OF DERRY INTERNATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL LIMITED

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024**

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### **Financial review**

Total income for the period was £155,598, of which £95,447 was generated from grant funding, £30,000 was generated from sponsorship agreements, £24,400 generated from tickets, programmes and merchandising sales and £5,751 from donations.

Total expenditure was £143,514 all of which was spent on the delivery of the City of Derry International Music Festival programme of events.

The charity has a deficit in reserves at the year end in the amount of £3,378, which is made up of:

- £7,500 restricted reserves carried forward in respect of funding to be utilised during 2024/25; and
- deficit in unrestricted reserves in the amount of £10,878.

### *Going concern*

The Trustees are implementing a strategy to eliminate the deficit in unrestricted reserves and return the charity to surplus over the next three financial years by i) reviewing the cost of its core programmes, ii) maximising income from current sources (tickets, competition entry fees, merchandising sales), and iii) diversifying income through its fundraising (trusts, corporates, donations). Based on 2024/25 financial performance at the date of approving the accounts, the Trustees expect that the charity will generate in excess of £15,000 net income and have committed to set this aside to reserves to address the deficit. Furthermore, the Trustees are committed to setting aside £15,000 per annum for the next three years to build a level of reserves in accordance with the charity's reserves policy.

### *Reserves policy*

The Board of Trustees has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation, and have determined that the main risk to the charity would be the loss of funding. Therefore, it is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to allow the charity to supplement funding secured and deliver the City of Derry International Choir Festival programme of events. Based on the funding sources of the charity, the Trustees consider an appropriate amount to hold in reserve would be £36,000. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

The charity's free reserves are in deficit at the reporting date and the Trustees plan to address this deficit as outlined above. Accordingly, the Trustees continue to strive to build a general level of reserves in accordance with their policy so that they will be able to continue the current activities of the charity.

### *Major risks*

The Trustees are aware of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Internal control risks are minimised through the procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity. Procedures are also in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers and clients. The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

### **Plans for future periods**

A twelfth anniversary edition of the Festival is in preparation for October 23rd – 27th 2024. The Festival will look to bring Ulster Orchestra to accompany the Festival Chorus on the opening night, to produce high-calibre guest concerts and a full community programme, attract national choirs to a Choir of the Festival event and present an international choir competition with leading international groups from around the world. It will also present a Symposium on issues of diversity and inclusion in choral music, with a team of international participants, partners and guest speakers.

### **Structure, governance and management**

#### **Governing document**

The City of Derry International Choir Festival Limited is a company limited by guarantee. The company was incorporated on 24th March 2017. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the company, and is governed by its Articles of Association.

# CITY OF DERRY INTERNATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL LIMITED

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024

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The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Donal Doherty

Colm Rainey

Grainne Stevenson

Joy Tennis

Martin White

Philip Gilliland

John Healy

(Resigned 7 March 2024)

Tessa Breslin

#### *Recruitment and appointment of trustees*

The Directors of the company are also charity Trustees for the purposes of charity law. Unless otherwise determined by ordinary resolution, the number of trustees shall not be subject to any maximum but shall not be less than one.

All members of the Board of Trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity.

None of the Trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the Trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

#### *Organisational structure*

The charity is administered by a Board of Trustees who are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the company. Board members are from a variety of professional backgrounds relevant to the work of the charity. The Board as a whole was approved by the AGM and continues to monitor its membership. The board has appointed a management team to manage the day to day operations of the charity.

#### **Statement of trustees' responsibilities**

The trustees, who are also the directors of City of Derry International Choir Festival Limited for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

# CITY OF DERRY INTERNATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL LIMITED

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

*FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024*

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The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



Philip Gilliland  
**Trustee**

28 February 2025