

# Sussex Chorus

## Annual Reports & Accounts

For the year ended 31 May 2020



## Sussex Chorus

### Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2020

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## Director of Music's Reports

It seems strange to be writing this, my second and final Director of Music report, roughly one year after our highly successful summer concert with Will Todd in 2019. Back then, coronavirus, furlough and social distancing were words many of us rarely used – hopefully soon, we will return to some sense of normality once more!

Since I arrived in January 2019, the choir has continued to grow in size, confidence and ability. With this in mind, I was deliberately ambitious with my programming for the 2019/20 season, selecting Durufle's exquisite *Requiem* for our November concert, and Bach's sublime *St John Passion* for Easter. Our concert of French music was, for me, a real highlight, and for a choral society to perform a piece without accompaniment (in this case, Durufle's *Notre Pere*) is no mean feat. We were joined by two young, lyrical soloists in Ella Rainbird-Earley (soprano) and Chris Murphy (baritone), who complimented the choir's sound and approach superbly. Though Faure's *Cantique de Jean Racine* will have been the most familiar work for many, I was heartened to see so many of the choir enthusiastically tackle the rhythmic challenges presented by Durufle's *Requiem*. I was delighted with the result, and of course, must thank Jeremy for his highly sensitive and accurate accompanying throughout.

Following an invitation from the National Trust, our next engagements of the season were Christmas concerts at Sheffield Park. Once more, I presented the choir with a mix of familiar and unfamiliar music, introducing Sasha Manning's *Manchester Carols*, as well as favourites by Bob Chilcott and John Rutter. We also welcomed Stephen Smith as our accompanist, who also generously allowed us to perform his beautiful setting of *In the Bleak Mid-winter*. It was a privilege to perform to new audiences in such a lovely environment, and I was grateful to receive so many compliments after each of our two concerts. Both choirs, though much smaller in number than usual, performed admirably, and I must thank the committee, as well as the choir as a whole, for ensuring we had a good balance between parts at both events. A week later, we welcomed friends and family to St Paul's School for our final, more informal, engagement of the year. Once more, the audience joined in with traditional favourites, creating a fabulous 'Christmas spirit' relished by all.

Since then, we've not been able to give the public performances originally planned for the 2019/20 season. That said, I feel I must mention how impressed I have been with the choir's ability and enthusiasm in tackling Bach's *St John Passion*. There are no easy movements here, and I have been most grateful for all the hard work at full rehearsals and sectionals, as well as in practice at home. Jeremy's accompanying has, once again, been immensely reliable, and I am sure, had the opportunity allowed, we would have all given a fantastic performance together.

Although the guidance around singing is currently unclear, I have every confidence that the choir is well placed to manage the situation, and to deal positively with the relevant government guidance. I am, of course, sad to be leaving you earlier than I had ever expected, but trust that the progress made over the past 18 months will enable the choir to flourish in 2021 and beyond. It has been a privilege to have worked with you all, and I am hugely grateful for how you have welcomed and supported me throughout my tenure. I must thank all the committee, and specifically Rob as Chairman, for the incredible backing and leadership they provide, and trust that the choir's centenary year will be the huge success that the choir very much deserves.

**Jack Thompson**  
Director of Music  
30 June 2020

## Chairman's Report

I spoke last year of the thunderous applause which followed the end of the Summer Concert at Hurstpierpoint College. This year sadly, no applause, no audience, no concert – but all of us locked away in our homes because of the Covid-19 Pandemic. What a way to have to end our 2019/2020 Season. More of that later.

Rehearsals started at the beginning of September when we welcomed new Members and a new accompanist, Jeremy Weaver. All have settled in well with Jeremy proving what an accomplished musician he is. We thank him for his flexible approach in not only playing the piano but also leading sectional rehearsals. The AGM had a good attendance and as well as the “usual” business the Elections for Vice-Chair and Committee members took place. Christine Wilson decided not to seek re-election as Vice-Chair, a position she had held for many years. We thanked her for all the work she had undertaken organising events, supporting colleagues etc. etc. and for keeping several Chairmen on the straight and narrow, particularly this one! We will miss her wisdom and guidance at Committee Meetings. Kate O'Neill was elected as Vice-Chair adding another responsibility to the long list of jobs she so admirably fulfils. All my fellow Officers and Committee Members work tirelessly behind the scenes for the Choir and in what has been a particularly difficult year, I thank them for their support and good humour. We have all had to master some new IT skills to ensure we can continue to meet.

Jack will deal in detail with our Concert performances – it has been good to be again challenged as a choir and to achieve such high standards. The two concerts at Sheffield Park, at the invitation of the National Trust, were a departure from the norm, exposing us to a wider audience and different surroundings. Our Carol “sing-along” again proved very popular and was enjoyed by all. 2020 got underway well. Then came the dreaded virus. Just days before our spring concert the country was advised not to hold large gatherings and days after it should have taken place we were in lockdown for the foreseeable future. We had no choice other than to cancel the *St John Passion* performance and suspend all Choir activities. This decision and then the cancellation of the Summer concert were a huge disappointment particularly after all the work put in at rehearsals for the St John. Sadly, there were financial implications as the professional musicians still had to be paid under their contracts and there was no income from ticket sales and fundraising events. We thank Jack and Jeremy for their understanding and for taking reduced fees which has assisted matters.

Disappointingly for us, Jack was offered and has accepted a new teaching role at St Edwards School in Oxford, and I had to reluctantly accept his resignation as Director of Music from the end of the Season. Jack has proved to be an excellent D of M. He is a great musician. His rehearsal style has been welcomed and enjoyed by all. He has challenged us in many ways, and I believe leaves us in great shape to face the coming Centenary year. We wish him well for the future. We were delighted that Stephen Brown has accepted our invitation to become Director of Music from 1<sup>st</sup> September. Already he and the Committee are working together on next Season and the Centenary.

Finally, to you the members, thank you for your help and assistance in so many ways during the season, particularly for your patience and understanding, for your messages and letters of support during the last three months. Each of us has a role in Sussex Chorus no matter how big or small to ensure that we put these present difficulties behind us and look forward to many more years of making music together as, here it comes again, The best Choir in Sussex.

**Rob Drake**  
Chairman  
30 June 2020

## Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2020

Sussex Chorus  
Registered charity (in England & Wales) no: 271678

### Legal and Administrative Information

#### Trustees

Mr R Drake	<i>Chairman</i>
Mrs C Wilson	<i>Vice-Chairman (resigned as a trustee 23 September 2019)</i>
Mrs K O'Neill	<i>Vice-Chairman (appointed as Vice-Chairman 23 September 2019)</i>
Mrs G West-Eacott	<i>Hon. Secretary</i>
Mr J Jalie	<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>
Mrs L McKay	
Mrs A Jordan	
Mrs H Woodard	
Mr R Moon	

#### Principal Office

c/o 1 Saxby Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 8UL

#### Independent Examiner

Mr S. Brentnall

#### Bankers

CAF Bank Ltd. - 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ

## Trustees Report for the Year ended 31 May 2020

The Trustees present their Report for the year ended 31 May 2020.

### Object of the Charity

The Charity's object is to provide, improve, develop, and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of choral music in all its aspects.

### Review of Activities

The activities of the Charity have been severely impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic. Three concerts were performed in the 2019-20 season. One was held at St Andrew's Church, Burgess Hill, and two were held at Sheffield Park and Gardens at the invitation of the National Trust. A "Carol Sing-along" was also held at St Paul's College, Burgess Hill. Concerts were promoted through posters, press advertising, our website, and handouts at other concerts. All other planned concerts and events were cancelled following the UK Governments advice on social gatherings following the lockdown of 24 March. These cancellations have impacted on finances as income was lower and expenses for Music professionals had to be met in line with contractual obligations.

### Trustees and Management

The Charity was managed by Trustees listed below:

Mr R Drake	Chairman
Mrs C Wilson	Vice-Chairman (resigned as a trustee 23 September 2019)
Mrs K O'Neill	Vice-Chairman (appointed as Vice-Chairman 23 September 2019)
Mrs G West-Eacott	Hon. Secretary
Mr J Jalie	Hon. Treasurer
Mrs L McKay	
Mrs A Jordan	
Mrs H Woodard	
Mr R Moon	

### Public Benefit

The Charity operates for the benefit of the public by the presentation of public choral concerts and recitals and by any other ways as far as the Society thinks fit.

## Financial Review

The financial activities are detailed in the Accounts on pp. 8-9. Receipts for the year were £26,371 (2019: £28,885) and payments were £23,388 (2019: £31,672). The difference in income and expenditure between 2020 and 2019 is almost entirely due to the Covid-19 outbreak in March 2020 that impacted the charities operations in March-May 2020, including the cancellation of a planned concert of Bach's *St John Passion* on 21 March 2020. Some costs associated with this concert were mitigated, and some receipts for tickets were received with audience members generously agreeing to forego a refund. However, some costs, including those for professional musicians scheduled to perform at the concert, were paid in line with contractual obligations.

The charity's policy is to maintain cash reserves of at least £10,000 to be able to cover the costs of at least one concert in the coming season. The funds at 31 May 2020 amounted to £11,020 (2018 £8,037). It is encouraging to have the level of our planned reserves, but the Sussex Chorus Committee will continue to undertake regular budget reviews to ensure this position is maintained.



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**Mr R Drake – Chairman**

For and on behalf of the Trustees of Sussex Chorus  
30 June 2020



**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES  
of SUSSEX CHORUS [Registered Charity No. 271678]**

I report on the accounts of Sussex Chorus for the year ended 31st May 2020 which are set out on pages 8 and 9.

**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 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:-

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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 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 explanations from you as 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 material matters have come to my attention which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act, or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

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**Steve Brentnall FCIE**

1 Meadow View Cottages

Town Littleworth

LEWES

BN8 4TH

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## Receipts and Payments Accounts

For the year ended 31 May 2020

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2020	Total 2019
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME RECEIPTS</b>				
Receipts from Charitable Activities				
Concert receipts	5,535	-	5,535	7,149
Subscriptions	12,345	-	12,345	11,255
Income tax recovered under Gift Aid	2,884	125	3,009	4,854
Fundraising income	2,918	500	3,418	3,996
Music hire and sales	1,142	-	1,142	885
Friends	910	-	910	735
Investment Income				
Bank interest	12	-	12	11
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>25,746</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>26,371</b>	<b>28,885</b>
<b>DIRECT CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE</b>				
Concert expenses	(9,895)	-	(9,895)	(15,941)
Rehearsal fees – accompanist and conductor	(5,165)	-	(5,165)	(6,504)
Rehearsal fees – room hire	(1,887)	-	(1,887)	(1,937)
Publicity	(2,770)	-	(2,770)	(3,474)
Music purchase/hire	(1,829)	-	(1,829)	(916)
Administration and retirement gifts	(1,319)	-	(1,319)	(523)
Sundry costs	-	-	-	(2,377)
<b>OTHER EXPENDITURE</b>				
Making music subscription and other subscriptions	(523)	-	(523)	523
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>(23,388)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(23,388)</b>	<b>(31,672)</b>
<b>NET RECEIPTS/(PAYMENTS) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>2,358</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>2,983</b>	<b>(2,787)</b>
Bank balances at 1 <sup>st</sup> June			8,037	10,824
<b>Bank balances at 31 May</b>			<b>11,020</b>	<b>8,037</b>

## Statement of Assets and Liabilities

At 31 May 2020

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2020	Total 2019
	£	£	£	£
<b>MONETARY ASSETS</b>				
Bank balances:				
CAF Cash account	1,000	-	1,000	1,000
CAF Gold account	9,395	625	10,020	7,037
<b>Bank balances</b>	<b>10,395</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>11,020</b>	<b>8,037</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

1. The financial statements have been prepared on the receipts and payments basis in accordance with section 133 of the Charities Act 2011.
2. There are no staff employed by Sussex Chorus.
3. Restricted Funds – Sussex Chorus received one restricted donation in 2019/20:

	Balance at 1 June 2019	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance at 31 May 2020
FUND	£	£	£	£	£
Centenary Fund	-	625	-	-	625
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>625</b>

### Restricted Funds

Centenary Fund                      *Funds to support Sussex Chorus Centenary Celebrations in 2021.*

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



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**Mr R Drake – Chairman**

For and on behalf of the Trustees of Sussex Chorus  
30 June 2020

