

Chair's Report to the AGM: January 2023

The equivalent Chair's report for the AGM for 2021/2022 was full of Covid related recovery: moving slowly and tentatively to outdoor rehearsal and performance with plans for a Covid-safe staging of Vivaldi's Gloria in the December.

So, much has changed in the last year and a bit. We are back to proper, in-person rehearsals and we have put on 4 major concerts: the Gloria in December 2021, Bach's St John at Easter 2022, Jabberwocky in November and then our Messiah just before Christmas. The shadow of Covid and other lurgies was there as we worried about our solo line-ups and the numbers in each part who were well enough to sing at the concerts but we kept going and produced memorable performances to appreciative audiences. I will leave it to Colin to comment further on the musical output.

We have also, as a choir been able to return to our community roots:

- employing local musicians as far as possible,
- setting ourselves charitable objectives: outreach concerts for free in the Summer term: Upwey, Borough Gardens and Piddlehinton (thank you Sara) where we also raised money for Christian Aid's Ukraine fund; carol singing at a party for disabled adults, at the hospital and two care homes in Dorchester. Only the weather prevented us from spreading our carol cheer more widely!
- our wish to be part of the town's twinning activities. As I write, a number of us are looking forward to performing in Bayeux with L'Orphéon de Bayeux and Kantorei an St. Andreas Lübbecke in April.

One of the highlights of the year for me has been to see and hear members of the choir taking solo slots in our concerts: the cameo parts in the St John, Stefan for first understudying and then performing so magnificently in Jabberwocky and, most recently, Emily's performance in Messiah. It is encouraging to all of us to have such strong, capable and brave singers in our midst.

Other positives have included seeing new members join and take a full part in choir activity. Our numbers are good and I feel that members have now returned to having Monday rehearsals as a fixed point in their week. Thank you for your commitment and please keep up the good work!

On a less positive note: we are facing rising costs in all sorts of ways and concert goers are feeling the financial pinch as are we all. We know that every concert we put on is going to make a loss – smaller or larger depending on ticket sales and the size of the forces we muster in order to perform. Our main sources of income remain subscriptions and ticket sales with only a little bit coming in via sponsorship. When I look at Ticket Source analysis it becomes clear that you are doing tremendous work selling tickets – early bird sales and "word of mouth" recommendation sell the most. Please continue to promote our concerts as widely as you can and persuade and cajole your family and friends to buy tickets. If you have ideas where we might acquire new sponsors, please let me know!

I must include a few thanks: to Colin whose energy and expertise continues to bring us new insights into familiar works and who challenges us, too, with the unusual and unfamiliar. To Heather and Brenda to whom we are indebted for their amazing accompanying skills. Please also spare a thought for your committee who are often paddling madly underwater as a concert approaches whilst maintaining their swan like demeanour: a lot of work goes on behind the scenes, week in and week out! This year both David Goddard and John Huggins are stepping down from the committee after, respectively some 5 and 10 years of hard work.

It is typical of their support for the choir that both are going to be continuing to help the committee: David in overseeing our twinning activities and John with his role keeping our bookings in order.

Finally, my thanks go to you, our members, without whom none of this would be possible. I hope you feel, like me, that we can look forward to a good year of music making in 2023.

Jane Howard

3rd January 2023

We have had a positive year on the whole, despite lingering Covid. Last year's 'Gloria' concert brought us back to performing live with settings of the eponymous text by Bob Chilcott, John Rutter and Vivaldi, with some great music for brass and, as a bonus, Cecilia McDowall's most effective and enjoyable Christmas Cantata, 'A Winter's Night'. A trio of young soloists added lustre to the evening.

'St John Passion' in April reinforced our German credentials and brought back the wonderful tenor Ruairi Bowen as Evangelist. The 'wild card' in our ambitious programming was 'Jabberwocky' by Derek Bourgeois in November, alongside Borodin's Choral Dances from Prince Igor. We nearly lost this concert due to Gavin Carr's last-minute withdrawal as soloist, but thanks to Stefan's integrity, musicianship, stamina and powers of learning by ear, what might have been a postponed or cancelled event turned into something of a local triumph, with an eager and appreciative audience. Thank you for your hard work learning this challenging repertoire in a relatively short space of time. 'Messiah' in December was a great success, and all our full concerts benefitted from excellent orchestras, for which organisation, warm thanks to Liz Adams.

A lighter vein was explored in the Summer, notably with George Shearing's evocative settings of Shakespeare, with the charismatic Andy Baker on double bass. Our work over the year is enhanced and supported most loyally and musically by Heather Reed, our superb accompanist. We are grateful also to Brenda for her most reliable 'deputy' support at the keyboard.

We are a broad church in terms of membership, with an excellent range of voice types and experience. Our repertoire is a positive mix of old and new, familiar and rarer pieces, and I like to think that we punch above our weight through the combination of assured choral singing, an excellent orchestra and superlative soloists. The 'mélange de haute qualité,' as the French ingredients of 'La Sauce HP' used to be described, is rich and sometimes strange, yet always interesting. The inner core (corps) of those who attend rehearsals regularly is very loyal, however, I would love to see more people committed to singing at our concerts. We have been as many as 15 or 20 voices down on occasions, and it saddens me that some members join the concert throng but rarely. Illness is unavoidable, of course, but I dream of a time when the complete glory of DCS is ranged before me.

Our future repertoire contains a good range of styles, including music by Bruckner, Buxtehude, Holst, Purcell, Schütz and Richard Blackford's *Pietà* written in 2018 for Gavin and the BSO Chorus and taken up subsequently by several other groups, including The Three Choirs' Festival last summer. Richard combines the renaissance text of the *Stabat mater* with poems by Anna Akhmatova in his *Pietà*. We look forward now to our French programme in March, followed - for a good number of singers - by the visit to Bayeux in April.

Onwards and upwards.

Colin Howard
16 January 2023

Treasurer's report for year ended 31 August 2022 and budget for year commencing 1 September 2022

Report on the previous year

We came into our first post-covid year with a healthy bank balance (almost £29,000) and our income and expenditure have remained pretty consistent overall compared to pre-covid times. There have been some variations – for example our audience seems to be more thirsty but less inclined to buy programmes than in the past, hall hire costs have reduced but ticket income has remained stable as have our subscriptions and we have incurred other costs (especially filming costs) that balance out any reductions.

The consistency of our income and expenditure means that we have, again, made a small loss (£1,500) and our bank balance is now just above £27,000. While our running costs are covered by membership fees, we have continued to put on loss-making concerts, losing just under £8,000 on concerts last year. This may be sustainable in the short to medium term (our balances would allow this level of overall loss for the next 18 years) but is this the preferred use for our money?

We were fortunate in receiving donations for both of our concerts, without which the loss would have been more than £9,000, but sponsorship money is reducing, our audience numbers are still not back to full strength (the increase in ticket price balances this out) and we need to consider our programme, our income sources and our overall financial approach to become more sustainable.

Budget for 2022/23

This brings me to the budget for the current year. First of all, I should like to thank Giles (the previous treasurer) for bringing the gift aid position up to date. As a result, we have received £6,500 above our normal income, but this relates to three years' outstanding gift aid and is a one off. I have taken a prudent approach to the budget, not including any uncertain income and ensuring that all known and likely expenses are included. I have also assumed audience sizes remain stable for the remaining concert of the year. Because of the gift aid bonus, we are likely to make a profit this year of £3,000 but that masks an in-year loss of over £3,000. In particular, if you look at our concert income and expenditure you will see that we have already recorded a loss of over £6,000 (with some expenditure still to come) and I am anticipating that the Spring and Summer concerts will also make small losses, increasing the budgeted loss to over £7,000.

While our subscriptions more than cover our running costs for now, I think it unlikely that our hire costs and other fees will remain as they are given the current rate of inflation and the PRS is currently consulting on increasing its rates significantly. Again, this brings me to a position of saying that we should take a more financially-driven approach to some or all of our concerts.

Concluding comments

I should like to thank Giles for answering my questions and tackling the gift aid during the handover and Steve Priddy for taking on the role of the auditor. He has made three recommendations to support record keeping and financial governance and I have recommended actions to address these below:

1. Gift Aid (GA) applications would be facilitated by a named role within the charity maintaining a current list of members and their eligibility or otherwise for inclusion in the GA scheme

2. It would be helpful to users of the financial statements for all stakeholders providing musical and other services to the Choral Society to promptly and accurately submit any invoices for payment
3. Consideration might usefully be given towards formalisation of a Friends and/or Patrons scheme for the Choral Society

I recommend that the committee consider:

1. How to use the balances that we hold in a productive way
2. Ensuring that our concert programme is more financially aware and that not all concerts are run at a loss
3. How to address the auditor's recommendations (suggestions below):
 - a. The treasurer, supported by the membership secretary, asks members to confirm their gift aid status and any other relevant details every other year as a minimum
 - b. The key suppliers (accompanist and conductor) are reminded to submit invoices every half term and in time for payment by 31 July each year
 - c. A formal list of patrons and friends, with an indication of amounts and dates, is provided for the treasurer

Elizabeth Humphrey

Treasurer

12 January 2023



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01-Aug-21

To

31-Jul-22

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Subscriptions	12,100	-	-	12,100	-
Concert income	7,452	-	-	7,452	-
Concert donors	1,500	-	-	1,500	-
Friends and patrons	410	-	-	410	-
Corporate sponsors	1,000	-	-	1,000	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	22,462	-	-	22,462	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	22,462	-	-	22,462	-
A3 Payments					
Rehearsal costs	6,996	-	-	6,996	-
Insurance and PRS	541	-	-	541	-
Other running costs	1,500	-	-	1,500	-
Concert costs	12,072	-	-	12,072	-
Scores	1,522	-	-	1,522	-
Publicity and printing	479	-	-	479	-
Other concert costs	1,081	-	-	1,081	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	24,191	-	-	24,191	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	24,191	-	-	24,191	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 1,729	-	-	- 1,729	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	- 1,729	-	-	- 1,729	-

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Floats	190	-	-
	Petty cash	52	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	242	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))			

	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets			
Cash at bank	27,057	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

[illegible]

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

Elizabeth Humphrey

16.01.23

Jane Howard

16.01.23



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the
trustees/ members
of**

Dorchester Choral Society

**On accounts for the
year ended**

31 July 2022

**Charity
no (if
any)**

285911

Set out on pages

3

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/07/2022.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's
statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

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

I have no concerns and 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

S. Piddly

Date: 6 January 2023

Name: Stephen Rex Priddy

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): Fellow Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA)

Address: Jestys
Spetisbury, Blandford Forum, Dorset
DT11 9DF

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

1. Gift Aid (GA) applications would be facilitated by a named role within the charity maintaining a current list of members and their eligibility or otherwise for inclusion in the GA scheme
2. It would be helpful to users of the financial statements for all stakeholders providing musical and other services to the Choral Society to promptly and accurately submit any invoices for payment
3. Consideration might usefully be given towards formalisation of a Friends and/or Patrons scheme for the Choral Society