



STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

Trustees' Annual Report

For the period

1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

Charity name: Steel City Choristers

Charity registration number: 1195909

Principal address: 2 The Grove, Topley, S17 4AS



Steel City Choristers

Report of the Trustees for the year ending 31 August 2023

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report and independently examined accounts for our financial year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.

Chair's Report

It really is thrilling to look back over what has been only our second year as an incorporated charity and reflect on all we have done and how so many people have come together to help make that possible.

Steel City Choristers has practically doubled in scale since our first year in terms of both the number of times we have sung in public and the size of our core operational budget. We started the year having served 18 different hosts, and by the end we had sung for a total of 34 different churches or other communities. We started the year with the choir having performed 23 times, and by the end we had delivered our 64th performance. We had the joy of singing not just in Sheffield Cathedral for the first time, but also in Bradford Cathedral and in Ripon Cathedral as we enjoyed our first residential weekend tour. We collaborated in a performance with the Sheffield Horn Quartet, spent a weekend rehearsing and performing with Hilary Davan Wetton, and for the first time sang services of Mattins, Candlemass, café-church and Good Friday meditations. We launched our second Reasons to Sing! project, and co-designed and twice delivered an innovative event of Lament - once as an official Covid memorial event for the city of Sheffield.

It is very satisfying and rewarding to see the strength of our relationships growing both within the choir community and across the city and beyond. There are so many people to thank.

First and foremost, our choristers are amazing! They commit so much time and work so hard, and they are sounding great. There are not many activities that children can get involved in that have them working so closely as a team with not just other children of different ages but with adults too. They are a credit to themselves and their families, and we're really proud of them all. I'd also like to recognise the support of our choristers' families - as a choir mum myself I know how much family life has to re-orientate around choristers' commitments. I'm really grateful for all their support and constructive feedback.

Our adult clerks are a bedrock for the choir. I'm grateful for their passion for choral music, their commitment to the next generation of singers, their enviable musicality and their good humour. Their involvement in Steel City Choristers transforms our choristers' experience, energising and inspiring their musicianship and normalising the pathway to excellence. We couldn't operate without them. And I am not unaware of how many have in the past been paid to sing elsewhere, yet choose to sing with us. They are great musicians and increasingly great friends too.

We owe much of our success to the leadership of our Director of Music Eleanor Jarvis. This has been her first year with us, and she has settled in quickly, establishing herself as a competent and well-liked conductor. I'm pleased that we were able to support her in these early days of her career with inspirational visits this year to meet and learn from members of the Music Department at both Truro and Winchester Cathedrals.



Our singing teacher, Vivien Pike, also remains an inspiration and support to many of our choristers, and we were delighted to celebrate her life-time of outstanding music teaching through a nomination for Classic FM's Music Teacher of the Year.

The trustees and I remain grateful to the Vicar and PCC of St John's Owlerton for continuing to provide a home for our otherwise itinerant choir, accommodating twice weekly rehearsals and a range of other events, including in January 2023 our first annual meeting of Friends and supporters to review our last year of activity, pub-quiz style.

Many other churches across the city have also offered the choir an enthusiastic and warm welcome this year, and I want to thank them for making our choristers and clerks feel so valued and appreciated. Singing for such a wide range of churches not only opens one's eyes to the variety of their churchmanship and the role that our music can play in their worship, but it also helps keep choristers' experience fresh and varied.

We have been pleased to develop relationships with other musical organisations across the city this year, in particular the Sheffield Music Hub who invited me to chair a new network of organisations from across the city interested in getting children singing. Together, we have the opportunity to be more joined up and strategic about how we coordinate each of our offers, and create clearer pathways for children to pursue their musical interests.

It has been exciting to have some publicity this year, not least via a feature article in the Spring 2023 edition of Classical Music Magazine, and the opportunity to be filmed as part of a documentary to be called "Lighten our Darkness" about the service of Choral Evensong, due to be released on DVD next year.

Friends of the choir are playing an increasingly significant role in funding our current and future activity. Their commitment to giving regularly to the charity provides a huge security net that underpins our future sustainability. My hope is that, over time, a bigger and bigger proportion of our costs will be covered by those locally who believe in our vision and value our service to the city, enabling us to reduce our dependence on hard-won grant funding.

We are also indebted to the growing number of Trusts and Foundations who have seen fit to provide us with funding this year as they recognise the impact we can have to further their charitable purposes - whether that is to promote church music, provide high quality education to children, or promote and diversify access to the arts.

One of the grants I have been most excited about is the Awards for All funding that is enabling us to deliver a second Reasons to Sing! project, this time with St Mary's Bramall Lane. The project is such a lovely opportunity to showcase the beauty of traditional choral music while bringing people together to celebrate the role that music plays in our lives. While the final concert will fall in our 2023-24 financial year, all the groundwork has happened this year, including understanding and filming the stories behind people's favourite songs; arranging those songs in four part harmony for the choir (thank you Tim Peters); and matching them to pieces from the choral repertoire. The process of learning the pieces has begun too. I'm thankful for our partnership with Yo Tozer Loft of YoYo Song Shop and for her connection to the community of users of the Social Supermarket at St Mary's that is making this project possible.

Finally, I'm grateful to the other trustees for their relentless commitment to the choir and to leading it in a way that offers the best possible experience for our choristers and clerks, and service to the churches and communities of Sheffield. Tony has now stood down after his two-year term came to end, having focused mainly on helping establish our work with schools. Jeremy has been a powerhouse of organisation with both the finances and the operation of the choir. Chris has ensured our governance runs smoothly while working flat out to raise all our funding. Angela has taken on roadie duties with our 'merch desk' at all our



events, ensured everyone has got fed on numerous occasions, and been an almost ever-present chaperone at rehearsals. Yinka remains our diversity and inclusion champion, and I was delighted to welcome Gill, a choir mum, to the board just before the end of the year.

While a charity can never take its existence for granted, it feels like Steel City Choristers has built and strengthened relationships this year that will underpin its role in the city for years to come.

Kate Caroe
Chair of Trustees



Objectives and Activities

Our purposes

The purposes of the charity are:

1. For the public benefit, to advance education and training of children and young people, particularly those living in or educated in Sheffield and the surrounding area, in the subject of music and in particular choral music, primarily but not exclusively by
 - a. creating opportunities for children, young people and adults to sing alongside each other to the highest musical standards; and
 - b. promoting and delivering musical and choral education and training to children and young people, regardless of their socio-economic or ethnic background and irrespective of their prior experience.
2. To advance public education in and appreciation of music and in particular choral music and related activities in all their aspects particularly in Sheffield and the surrounding area, primarily but not exclusively by presenting public performances and producing digital content, particularly for communities that would not otherwise have access to choral music.

Our activities

Steel City Choristers is a choir of children and adults rooted in the cathedral choral tradition, conducted by Director of Music, Eleanor Jarvis. We serve a diverse range of churches and other communities in and around Sheffield with a focus on those who would not otherwise have access to choral music. We also deliver high quality curriculum-linked singing workshops in schools and communities.

Children and young people aged between 6 and 18 who join Steel City Choristers are trained to sing to the highest musical standards alongside experienced adult singers. Singing with us is subject to an audition, but we do not require any prior musical experience. We aim to put relationships first and to be an inclusive and welcoming community. We do not charge fees to children or adults who sing with us, though parents are encouraged to give to the work of the charity if they are in a position to do so. We also welcome children and adult singers of all faiths and none. We help our choristers to understand the music they sing and the contexts and venues in which they sing it, including through the youth work that we integrate into our rehearsals that also helps to build relationships among the choristers.

During term time, our choristers rehearse for three and a half hours a week split across two evenings, with separate provision for our junior choristers to help them develop a firm foundation of musical skills. Our teenage boys with changing voices rehearse for two hours a week during term time, and the Clerks (adult singers) rehearse for 90 minutes each week.

Choristers who have sung with the choir for at least a term and who are aged nine or over are also eligible to receive 20 minutes of one-to-one singing lessons with our teacher, Mrs Vivien Pike, every two weeks in term time.

While we are rooted in the cathedral music tradition, we do not belong to a single church. We are an independent choir that serves a wide range of churches and other communities across Sheffield, spanning the sacred and secular divide by serving all those who recognise the artistic and spiritual value of the music we sing. However, in line with our focus on church choral repertoire, the majority of the choir's engagements are to lead worship in churches. We believe music can be a powerful vehicle for worship, and can create a space for personal contemplation and being present in the moment. Our aim is to:



- Enable choral music for churches within the tradition that have no choir of their own;
- Promote choral music to churches from other musical traditions; and
- Enhance choral music for churches that need our support to sing more ambitious repertoire.

Unlike many choirs that aim to attract people to their own events, we focus on taking our choral music out into the communities where people already gather and shape our offer around their needs. We focus on sharing high quality choral music with those who would not otherwise access it, prioritising communities with less cultural capital, because we believe in its power to change lives and want more people to benefit from its beauty and the joy it brings. In addition to singing church services, we design creative and innovative ways of engaging with communities and sharing our music with them.

Our singing workshops in schools and community settings aim to inspire primary age children to sing and join choirs. They can be linked to the Key Stage 2 Model Music Curriculum or otherwise tailored to schools' needs. Our music education resources are designed for non-music specialists to enable them to follow up on our sessions and continue to help children develop key musical skills. We signpost children to local singing opportunities - including through information about Steel City Choristers and how to arrange an informal audition to join us.

Further information about our activities is available on our [website](#), including:

- [about](#) the choir, its origin and unique ways of working
- our [calendar](#) of opportunities to hear us sing
- how to [join](#) our choir
- special items of [news](#) and previous editions of our [newsletters](#)
- our offer to [churches](#), including the service of [Evensong](#)
- our work in [schools](#) and our free music [education resources](#)
- our innovative [Lament](#) and [Reasons to Sing!](#) projects
- how we can support community, business and other [events](#)
- our offer to potential [sponsors](#).

Statement on public benefit

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. This means that we have:

- made decisions to ensure our charity's purpose provides benefit
- managed risks of detriment or harm to our charity's beneficiaries
- made decisions about who benefits in ways that are consistent with our purpose
- made decisions to make sure any personal benefits are no more than incidental.

We have exercised our discretion:

- in accordance with our charity's purpose, and not outside of it
- for the public benefit
- with regard to the commission's public benefit guidance where relevant
- in accordance with the general framework for Trustee decision making.



The role of volunteers

Volunteers have played a critical role in the operation and governance of the charity this year, including our:

- **Chaperones:** In line with our safeguarding procedure all choir rehearsals and events in which our choristers are taking part are supervised by at least one chaperone. Eight people supported the choir as chaperones during the course of the year, six of whom are parents of choristers.
- **Clerks:** While many adult members of the choir have in the past commanded a salary or financial scholarship for the high quality of their singing, all of them sing with Steel City Choristers as volunteers without payment.
- **Advisors & Patrons:** The advice and support of a range of experienced and accomplished musicians and leaders has been invaluable to the Trustees as they steered the charity through its first year.
- **Trustees:** All Trustees share a passion for seeing choral music more widely sung and appreciated across the city. They bring a diverse range of relevant skills and experience to the leadership of the organisation. All of them volunteer their time to lead and govern the charity.

Achievements and Performance

Overview

Steel City Choristers has thrived over the year from September 2022 to August 2023. We have developed our maturity and resilience as an organisation, as well as our reputation and profile as an innovative and high-quality choir. The range of opportunities opening up for us has continued to grow, including the diversity of both the churches and other communities we have sung for and the repertoire we have sung, as well as the range of schools and communities for whom we have delivered singing workshops.

Chorister recruitment

We were encouraged by the number of children auditioning for and joining the choir this year, attracted by word of mouth and events such as our *Be a Chorister at Christmas* event that gave children the opportunity to experience performing with the choir at a carol concert in December 2022 attended by the Lord Mayor. Recent feedback from choristers and their parents has highlighted the value of the youth work and social events we integrate into our work with our choristers and how this is helping to create a child-centred organisation in which they feel known and valued.

Over the year, we recruited 10 new choristers, seven of whom decided to stay with the choir - two are full choristers and the other five are juniors who are making good progress, and two new regular adult clerks, three new occasional clerks and a number of new depts. Offset by other choristers that have left us, by the end of the year, overall numbers have slightly increased to 14 full choristers, 5 juniors, 3 changing voices and 9 regular clerks.

Our choristers' diversity has increased. They live in seven postcode areas of Sheffield and:

- 30% are an ethnicity other than White
- 57% are female
- 30% speak a language other than English at home
- 13% identify as having a special need (e.g. learning, medical or physical).



Parents of new choristers have said: *“This is a fantastic choir - they are so supportive and make rehearsals really fun”* and *“My child loves it - she really enjoys coming to choir”*.

Music education for choristers

We delivered around 200 hours of musical education to our choristers over the course of the year. Over 36 weeks of term time, this included 3.5 hours of professional choral training every week and fortnightly 1:1 singing lessons, as well as a diverse range of 41 performances. As well as musical skills and the benefits of singing for mental and physical well-being, our choristers are developing confidence, emotional resilience, teamwork, commitment and concentration skills that will prepare them well for life.

In recognition of how it can be a big step for new children to join the choir, over the last year we have further developed our musical provision for junior choristers as part of our regular weekly rehearsals to help them develop a strong foundation of core musical skills, and good relationships: both of which are key to them finding their feet and sticking with the choir. Having this provision in place has meant that we have been able to recruit more young singers than we would have previously been able to support in the main choir.

We have also supported our teenage boys to keep singing. Many choirs don't offer boys the opportunity to continue singing once their voices change. But this is important to us as we seek to put relationships first and be an inclusive and welcoming community.

Particular highlights of the choristers' musical education this year were the opportunity to:

- work with and learn from Hilary Davan Wetton during a weekend of rehearsals and an informal concert;
- sing the morning and evening services at Bradford Cathedral;; and
- go on our first residential weekend tour to sing services at Ripon Cathedral.

Youthwork

Sophie Boughton, the youth worker at St John's, led youth work as part of our Monday rehearsals each week. This included a variety of activities, such as

- talking about different church traditions e.g. a cathedral, or an Anglo-Catholic church;
- talking about our highs and lows of recent services or concerts we had sung, or of our week or recent holiday;
- playing games such as Ninja or Grandmother's Footsteps;
- telling an OutoftheBox story about Advent or Easter; and
- telling an OutoftheBox story of the Magnificat and then listening critically to a setting of the canticles, and the story of the destruction of Jerusalem and then listening to the Tallis Lamentations.

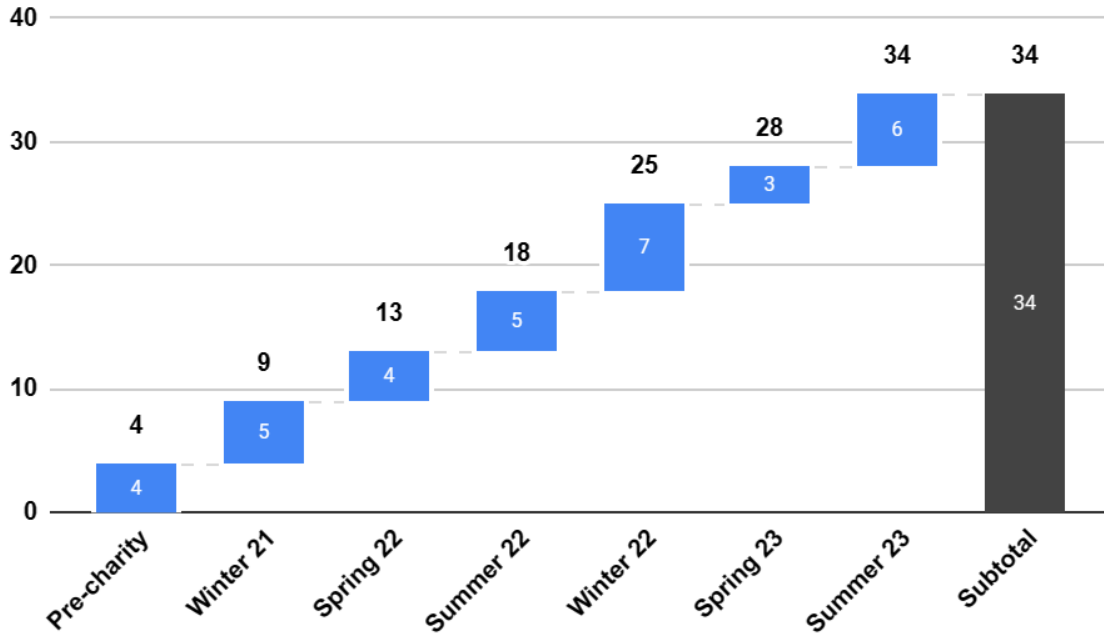
Hosts

We sang for a total of 26 different hosts in 2022-23, 16 of which were hosts that we sang for the first time, including three cathedrals for whom we were delighted to be invited to sing:

- Sheffield – where we sang Evensong in May;
- Bradford – where we sang services on a Sunday in June; and
- Ripon – where we enjoyed our first residential: singing a weekend of services in July.

By the end of the year, this brought the total number of host communities that the choir has sung for to date to 34.

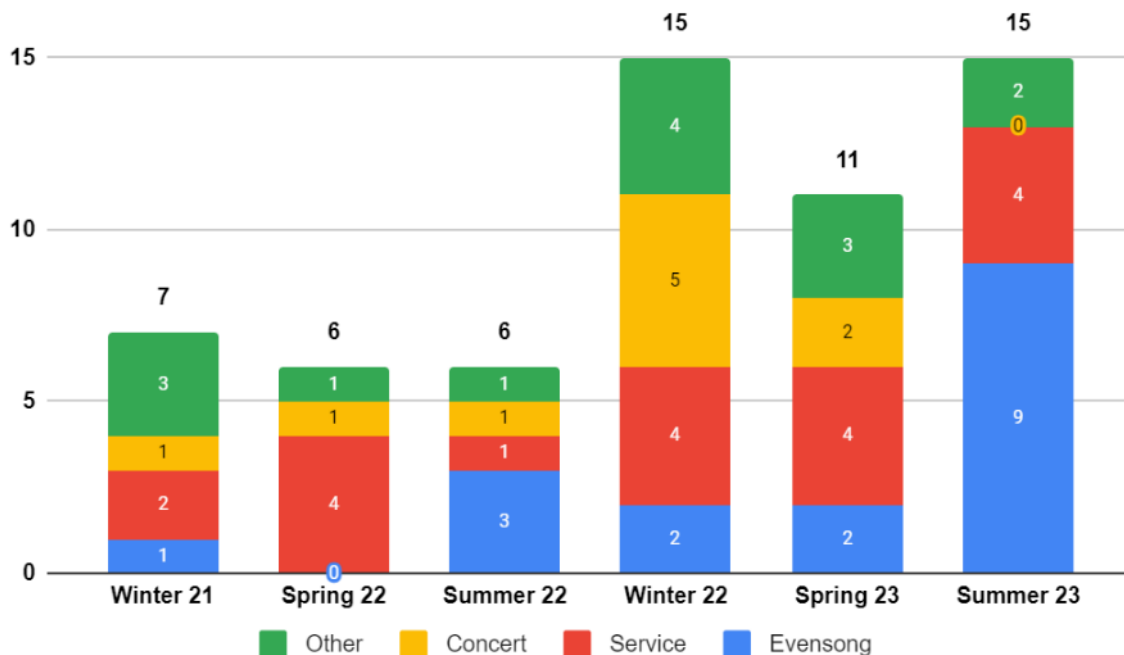
New Host Communities for whom we have sung, by term



Performances

Over the year we sang in public a total of 41 times - 25 church services (for 15 different hosts) and 16 other concerts or events (for 13 different hosts). This was a significant increase on the 19 engagements (11 services and 8 other events) we sang in 2021-22.

Singing Engagements, by term and type





We estimate that we reached a total of over 3,200 people with our music in 2022-23. Given our ambition to introduce more people to the choral tradition, we were particularly pleased with the number of people in the congregation for the choral services we have sung. For example, the average attendance for the services of Evensong that we sang at local parish churches was 44, with a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 70. 130 attended our Evensong at Sheffield Cathedral. In total, we estimate that around 2,100 people have attended services that we have sung this year.

Our 41 singing engagements were as follows:

1	18 Sep 2022	Beauchief Abbey	Evensong (Clerks only)
2	25 Sep 2022	St John's Church, Knaresborough	Evensong
3	16 Oct 2022	Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses	Mattins
4	10 Nov 2022	St Andrew's Church, Psalter Lane	Music Festival Horn Quartet Concert
5	12 Nov 2022	Highfield Trinity Church	Lament COVID-19 Memorial Event
6	23 Nov 2022	Gulliver's Kingdom	North Star Schools Event
7	27 Nov 2022	Christ Church, Dore	Advent Carol Service
8	2 Dec 2022	St John's Church, Owlerton	Snowflake Switch On Event
9	3 Dec 2022	Woodseats Allotments	Carol singing for Children's Hospital
10	10 Dec 2022	St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield	Charity Christmas Concert
11	11 Dec 2022	St Catherine of Siena Church	Brass & Voices Concert
12	14 Dec 2022	Cutlers' Hall	Master Cutler's Christmas Carols
13	17 Dec 2022	City Centre	Carol singing for Children's Hospital
14	18 Dec 2022	St John's Church, Owlerton	Carol Service
15	20 Dec 2022	Mount Tabor Church, Parson Cross	Carol concert
16	8 Jan 2023	St John's Church, Owlerton	Epiphany cafe church
17	13 Jan 2023	St John's Church, Owlerton	Choir Friends New Year Event
18	15 Jan 2023	Christ Church, Stannington	Family service
19	29 Jan 2023	St John's Church, Abbeydale	Evensong
20	2 Feb 2023	St Matthew's Church, Carver Street	Candlemas
21	4 Mar 2023	St Matthew's Church, Carver Street	Workshop with Hilary Davan Wetton
22	12 Mar 2023	St Mary's Church, Ecclesfield	Evensong
23	18 Mar 2023	St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield	Classical Sheffield concert
24	25 Mar 2023	Mount Tabor Church, Parson Cross	Lent Lament event
25	29 Mar 2023	MAGNA	Get Up To Speed with STEM event
26	7 Apr 2023	Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses	Good Friday meditations
27	23 Apr 2023	St John the Baptist, Hooton Roberts	Evensong
28	14 May 2023	St Mary's Church, Ecclesfield	Evensong

29	21 May 2023	Sheffield Cathedral	Evensong
30	4 Jun 2023	Bradford Cathedral	Eucharist
31	4 Jun 2023	Bradford Cathedral	Evensong
32	18 Jun 2023	Beauchief Abbey	Evensong
33	25 Jun 2023	St Mark's Church, Broomhill	Eucharist
34	8 Jul 2023	High Green School	School Summer Fair
35	9 Jul 2023	Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses	Evensong
36	21 Jul 2023	St John the Baptist, Hooton Roberts	Evensong (Clerks only)
37	21 Jul 2023	Earl of Strafford, Hooton Roberts	Songs in the pub (Clerks only)
38	29 Jul 2023	Ripon Cathedral	Procession service
39	29 Jul 2023	Ripon Cathedral	Evensong
40	30 Jul 2023	Ripon Cathedral	Eucharist
41	30 Jul 2023	Ripon Cathedral	Evensong

Singing workshops

Over the last year, we have continued to expand the number of Sheffield schools with whom we have worked, enabling us to further develop and improve our approach - including in how we communicate with schools, set expectations for how we will work with them, and how we tailor our provision to meet their needs. In 2022-23, we ran a total of 63 workshops in 13 different schools and other community venues that delivered high quality music education activities to over 2,500 children.

One school said: *“The children thoroughly enjoyed the workshops. They talked about it for a long time afterwards. They really enjoyed watching the videos and seeing what was possible.”*

Promoting choral music

We have continued to develop creative and innovative ways of promoting the English choral tradition and sharing our music with new and diverse groups of people who wouldn't seek it out or otherwise experience it:

- Our [Lament](#) events at Remembrance 2022 and Lent 2023 brought to life artwork illustrating the various stages of lament that people may be feeling, including in the wake of the pandemic. We sang a piece of choral music for each stage to help create a reflective space for people to process their experiences.
- We started a new [Reason to Sing!](#) project with St Mary's Bramall Lane Community Centre in which we celebrate the role that music plays in people's lives by listening to the stories behind people's favourite songs and matching them to pieces of choral music from our repertoire through the similar emotions they express.

Through both of these projects we have continued to take our choral music outside of church services to new audiences and contexts in order to introduce people to its beauty and



relevance. We have also developed a new [Evensong page](#) on our website explaining and promoting the service of Choral Evensong.

Communications

We have developed our communications with our Friends and other supporters through the ten editions of our email Newsletter that were sent over the course of the year. The number of subscribers more than doubled from 92 at the end of July 2022, to 209 at the end of July 2023.

We were delighted to have our origin story and activity as a choir featured in a double page article in the Spring 2023 edition of Classical Music Magazine.

In May 2023, we were filmed for a documentary about the service of Evensong, in which we will feature alongside the choirs of Winchester Cathedral, Truro Cathedral and St John's College, Cambridge. The Producer is keen to showcase our community-based approach to sustaining and sharing high-quality choral music - particularly the way we are offering services of Choral Evensong to local parish churches. We expect the documentary to be available in 2024.

Impact

Through the year we received very positive feedback and a number of strong endorsements from the churches and communities for whom we have sung that demonstrate our impact and the extent to which they value our work.

"It was wonderful to welcome the Steel City Choristers to St Mary's Ecclesfield. The choir were marvellous! It was such a special service as it is probably thirty or forty years since Choral Evensong was last sung at St Mary's."

Revd Tim Gill, Vicar, St Mary's Church Ecclesfield

"I formally write on behalf of the Dean and Chapter of Ripon Cathedral for visiting Ripon and enhancing the worship of the congregations over the weekend. It was excellent. I, and so many people in the congregation of Ripon Cathedral were impressed with the quality and tone of your music, covering the broad range from the well-known hymns 'Lord of the Dance' and 'When the saints go marching' to Bruckner's Os Justi and a Mass setting by Stanford. It is a phenomenal achievement to produce the standard of music you did, which was on a par with cathedral standards without the resources usually associated with a cathedral music foundation. You are all to be congratulated on the work that has been put in to create a choir that is has professional standards and with all choir members seeming to enjoy the experience so much You all work so hard and will have wonderfully full diaries, but if you could return to Ripon to enhance our worship sometime soon, that would be wonderful."

Revd Canon Michael Gisbourne, Canon Precentor, Ripon Cathedral

"Steel City Choristers are a talented yet humble group of musicians who in a very short time have made an impression in many postcodes in Sheffield and beyond. They are a fabulous resource to the diocese and greatly supportive even to small parishes, like ourselves in Hooton Roberts: a rural village fighting to keep our church open. Our experience of the choristers here was uplifting and mutually supportive."

Liza Nash, Church Warden, St John the Baptist Church, Hooton Roberts



“Steel City Choristers look good, sound good and bring an extra spark.”

Fiona Law, Director of Music, St Matthew’s Church Carver Street

“We were delighted to have Steel City Choristers lead our Advent Service this year. The choir sounded absolutely fantastic – it was a real blessing to have such high quality choral music in a local church setting. Our own choir dwindled and disbanded a few years ago, so to welcome Steel City Choristers to lead us in choral worship was inspiring and invigorating. Their vision to serve a wide and diverse range of communities across the city and Diocese is a gift. I’ve already recommended them to other churches in the area and very much look forward to inviting them back to Christ Church.”

Rev’d Andy Patrick, Vicar of Christ Church, Dore

“Thank you for the wonderful contribution Steel City Choristers made to my carol service, I have received countless positive comments on how lovely it was.”

Dame Julie Kenny DBE KL, The Master Cutler, 2022-23

“Steel City Choristers were amazing. It was a joy to see them perform with confidence, enthusiasm and real talent. We genuinely recommend them, not only for their high standard of performance, but for their work developing and engaging young people.”

Colonel P Bates, Clerk to the Company of Cutlers

Reflections on the success of our model

Our aim is to pioneer a new model for sustaining and diversifying access to the all-age English choral tradition. To be viable, a choir needs people to sing, people to sing for, and money to cover its costs. Over the last year we have sought to identify the features of our model that make this possible. We think that:

We recruit singers because:

- Our intensive musical education is free and first class with the opportunity to sing in a wide and diverse range of churches and other venues;
- Our youthwork and wider approach puts children at the centre of what we do and means they have fun, build friendships and feel valued; and
- We are independent and don’t sing every Sunday morning, so we are more accessible to those who want to sing but who would not feel comfortable joining a church, as well as to churchgoers who wouldn’t want to leave their church in order to join a choir.

We have people to sing for because:

- Churches and other communities invite us to sing for them, which means that we are not responsible for attracting a congregation or raising an audience; and
- We always tailor our offer to meet the needs of the churches and communities we sing for, so they feel grateful and well served.

We charge no fees to our singers or hosts, but raise money because:

- Choristers’ parents value our free musical education, and although under no obligation to give to the charity, many do;



- The organisations for whom we sing value our music and often choose to give us a gift in recognition of this;
- We attract giving from individuals who support our charitable aims; and
- We attract grant funding from bodies that recognise the educational and/or artistic value of our work.

Performance of fundraising activities

We do not charge fees to the children or adults to sing with us, to the schools or communities for whom we deliver singing workshops, or to the hosts for whom we sing. This means that money will never be a barrier to people accessing choral music. Instead, our aim is to develop a diverse and sustainable funding model based on income from those who recognise the high quality of our music education and the value of our work to promote and sustain the cathedral choral tradition.

We are hugely grateful to the growing number of people supporting the charity financially as Friends of the choir - up by 11 to 33, including many parents of choristers. We are greatly encouraged by how the Friends scheme has grown in less than two years to become a significant source of income. Our aim is to continue to grow the amount of regular giving from Friends to create a sustainable and engaged source of local support from people who value our work and see us as an asset for the city.

Many host communities also gave financially in gratitude for us singing for them, and this source of income has grown over the last year, in part reflecting an increase in the number of our singing engagements.

We developed a business sponsor strategy with associated promotional material this year that led to very welcome support from the charitable foundation of the international Sheffield-based firm, Gripple. We hope to further develop relationships with Sheffield businesses in the coming year.

Meanwhile, we have worked incredibly hard to secure grant funding to underpin our finances while we build support from Friends, hosts and sponsors. Over the course of the year we received funding from 16 local and national grant funders. We remain aware, however, that grant applications are very resource-intensive to plan and write, and they are very competitive, and hence future income from grant funding cannot be taken for granted.

In total, the income we secured meant that we were able to not only fully fund the activity we set out to deliver in 2022-23, despite this requiring our operational budget to almost double from the previous financial year, but also grow our reserves, and end the year with a healthy surplus to carry forward towards costs in 2023-24.

Our fundraising was led by one of our trustees on a voluntary basis, with only a minimal payment to a fundraising professional for one specific piece of advice on how to strengthen an unsuccessful multi-year bid to the Arts Council. Unfortunately, the revised application was also turned down.

The charity remains on a steep growth trajectory, with the range of opportunities opening up for the choir continuing to expand, including the possibility in future of both domestic and international tours. The charity also remains heavily reliant on the goodwill of a wide range of volunteers who give their time and skills pro bono to support the planning, delivery and administration of the choir's activities. While we end this year in a relatively strong financial



position, the trustees therefore do not underestimate the scale of the ongoing challenge to secure sufficient funds to grow and maintain the choir on a sustainable basis.

Financial Review

A significant increase in expenditure in 2022-23 was matched by strong growth in all forms of income.

Expenditure

Total expenditure in 2022-23 was £34,266 of which £32,421 was on in-year operational costs (the balance being costs accrued from 2021-22, and funds received that were then spent or given to charity on behalf of others). This represents a significant increase of around 50% on the total expenditure in the previous year, driven largely by a large growth in musician fees given our greater volume of activity, increased costs of our rehearsal venue, and the costs of our residential tour to Ripon.

Our overheads remain low, with 62% of expenditure being on fees to the musicians who deliver our musical education, and a further 25% on expenditure on costs directly associated with musical activities. Non-musical expenditure was therefore only 13%, comprising 5% invested in training and building our choir community and 8% spent on administrative costs such as printing, publicity, and insurance.

Expenditure this year included £563 for costs incurred in 2021-22 comprising a £500 gift to St John's Church Owlerton for use of their building for our rehearsals, and a £63 payment to our Director of Music for a community workshop delivered in August 2022.

Income

We secured income from a diverse range of sources in 2022-23. Our operational income (total income less the funds received to give or spend on behalf of others), totalled £56,083. Of this, 68% was from 16 different grants, 23% was from Friends and other individual donors, 5% was from the organisations and communities for whom we sang.

Total income in 2022-23 was £57,476, comprising:

Restricted grants totalling £13,549:

- Awards for All - £9,614 for a *Reasons to Sing!* Project with St Mary's Bramall Lane
- Sheffield Council - £1,971 for a *Be a Chorister at Christmas* event and schools work
- Sheffield City Council Covid-19 Memorial Fund - £1,964 for a *Lament* event

Unrestricted grants totalling £24,756:

- D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust - £4,000
- Ecclesfield Welfare and Educational Charities - £1,000
- Golsonscott Foundation - £1,000
- Gripple Foundation - £246
- Ouseley Church Music Trust - £3,000
- Sarah Nulty Power of Music Foundation - £500
- Sheffield Burgesses Education Foundation - £2,500



- Sheffield Grammar School Education Foundation - £3,000
- Sheffield Town Trust - £2,500
- Sheffield's Worshipful Company of Cutlers - £750
- St Mark's Church Grenoside - £250
- Williams Church Music Trust - £5,000
- Worrall Male Voice Choir Musical Grants Foundation - £1,000

Donations totalling £15,663:

- Giving from Friends of the choir - £12,477
- Gifts and donations from those for whom we sang - £2,931
- Other donations from individuals or organisations - £255

Other income totalling £3,517:

- Contributions towards our tour to Ripon - £1,390
- Contributions for other goods/services - £627
- Gift aid on 2021-22 giving - £735
- Giving to pass on to other charities - £765

End year position

At the end of the year, the charity held £36,718 in cash, of which £3,908 was restricted funding for expenditure on our Reasons to Sing! project that is due in 2023-24. The charity does not hold any investments.

In light of Trustees' [Reserves Policy](#) to maintain a reserve equivalent to approximately six months' operational costs, and the projected growth in these costs in future years, an additional £10,000 was added to reserves, bringing the total held to £17,000. The surplus cash carried forward into 2023-14 was therefore £19,718 (funds brought forward from last year were £13,508 - a rounding error means this appeared as £13,507 last year's accounts).

The Trustees do not have any uncertainty about the charity continuing as a going concern.

Structure, Governance and Management

Steel City Choristers is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Foundation) and governed by a board of Trustees. There are no external persons or bodies entitled to appoint Trustees to the board. All appointments to the board are made by the Trustees on the basis of people's relevant skills and experience.

The charity does not have any employees, but rather engages music professionals on a freelance basis, paying fees for the services they render.

The board of Trustees delegates specific responsibilities to three committees each tasked with leadership in relation to a number of strategic aims:

1. Operations Committee

- **To Sing:** Provide regular opportunities for choir members to rehearse, receive specialist musical tuition and perform



- **To Grow:** Recruit new children and adults to sing with us to both grow and diversify our membership and retain those we have
 - **To Safeguard:** Ensure we operate in a safe and lawful manner at all times
2. Partnerships, Projects and Communications Committee
- **To Reach Out:** Establish relationships with new partners and host communities to diversify those hearing and appreciating our singing
 - **To Innovate:** Design and deliver ways to engage children in choral music and present it to audiences who wouldn't otherwise have access to it
 - **To Promote:** Raise public awareness and interest in Steel City Choristers
3. Finance and Governance Committee
- **To Thrive:** Ensure the sustainability and financial viability of the organisation
 - **To Comply:** Ensure the propriety and efficiency of our organisational governance and reporting

The Trustees, and in particular the Chair, are advised by the charity's Patrons and Advisors – details of whom are available on the [Meet the Team](#) page of our website.

The Trustees managing the charity in 2022-23 were:

- Kate Caroe (Chair) – a home educator and founding co-director of OutoftheBox Training, a not-for-profit organisation supporting personal and community wellbeing through the power of story and play.
- Jeremy Dawson (Treasurer) – Professor of health management at the University of Sheffield, Chair of a local orchestra (Hallam Sinfonia), and former Lay Clerk at Sheffield Cathedral.
- Chris Caroe (Secretary) – a civil servant at the Department for Education.
- Tony Laycock – a retired primary school headteacher (Trustee until July 2023).
- Yinka Oluwole – a doctor and staff governor at the Sheffield Children's Hospital and Non-Executive Director at Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust.
- Angela Holman – a teacher and choir parent.
- Gill O'Connor – a teacher and choir parent (trustee from July 2023).

There are no corporate Trustees.

No Trustees hold title to property belonging to the charity.

There are no funds held as custodian Trustees on behalf of others.

There are no exemptions from disclosure.

Risks

The principal risks facing the charity and how these are mitigated are detailed below.

Volunteer risk: that we do not continue to benefit from the very high level of pro bono support we rely on to plan, delivery and administer the choir's activity



We put relationships first and make efforts to protect the wellbeing of all those who contribute their time and skills voluntarily to enable the successful operation of the choir. We continue to identify tasks that can be delegated and shared between a wider group of people to reduce our heavy reliance on a few individuals, and also to weigh up the feasibility of incorporating additional activities within our budget to be undertaken on a paid basis.

Recruitment risk: that we are unable to sustain the number of children and adults singing that we need to operate a viable choir.

Mitigation: We recruit children to sing in the choir without prejudice to their background or prior experience and do not charge fees, so that money is never a barrier to singing with us. We maximise word of mouth and social media opportunities to encourage children to audition to join us, especially in September at the beginning of the school year. Throughout the year, we tell children about the choir as we deliver singing workshops in schools and community settings and hold a 'Be a Chorister at Christmas' event to create an opportunity for children to experience singing with us. Our focus on building relationships through our youth work and choir socials supports retention of existing choristers. We encourage boys whose voices change to continue singing with us, including through specialist music training during rehearsal time. We recruit experienced adult singers for the lower parts mainly via word of mouth.

Funding risk: that we are unable to secure the funding we need to sustain our planned activities.

Mitigation: We have developed a diverse funding model based on a number of different sources of income. Our aim is to reduce our dependence on grant funding over time as we build a broader base of local supporters who see us as an asset for the city and give regularly to support us. We set an annual budget at the start of the year having regard to funds currently available and likely future income. Financial controls ensure all expenditure remains within budget. We maintain a financial reserve equivalent to approximately six months core operating costs, in line with our Reserves Policy published at steelcitychoristers.org.uk/policies providing resilience to continue core operations to address any significant shortfall in funding, should the need arise.

Safeguarding risk: that a safeguarding incident occurs despite the policies and procedures in place to keep everyone safe.

Mitigation: We have members of our trained team of chaperones present at every event involving children, and appropriate checks and training for all adults who are involved with the choir. Our robust safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed at least annually in line with Charity Commission guidance.

Retention risk: that our Director of Music resigns and that we are faced with the cost, disruption and uncertainty of recruiting a replacement.

Mitigation: The Trustees have developed a positive and collaborative relationship with the Director of Music and are confident that she shares their strong sense of ownership and pride in relation to the operation and future plans for the choir. The Trustees are committed to offering the Director of Music exciting and vibrant opportunities for creative musical expression and to supporting her ongoing professional development, backed where appropriate with appropriate funding. The Director of Music has agreed to provide us with three months' notice of any intention or plan to step down from her role.



Statement of Financial Activities 2022-23

These accounts cover the period from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Last year
	£	£	£	£
Income				
From predecessor organisation	-	-	-	14,653
Donations - Friends	12,477	-	12,477	3,718
Donations - Other	255	-	255	137
Income from performances	2,931	-	2,931	869
Grants	24,746	13,549	38,295	15,500
Contributions towards domestic tours	1,390	-	1,390	-
Contributions for other goods/services	627	-	627	612
Gift Aid on previous year's giving	735	-	735	-
Contributions for charitable donations	-	765	765	913
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	34
Total income	43,162	14,314	57,476	36,436
Expenditure				
Director of Music fees	7,803	6,368	14,171	8,082
Other musician fees	3,480	2,412	5,892	3,995
Director of Music recruitment	-	-	-	1,073
Training	559	-	559	659
Recordings	-	900	900	2,700
Music purchase	646	709	1,354	960
Travel	145	-	145	346
Venue hire	2,128	400	2,528	653
Insurance/subscriptions	577	-	577	383
Independent inspection of accounts	250	-	250	-
DBS checks	50	-	50	13
Web hosting	101	-	101	85
Printing, postage, promotional materials	211	303	514	910
Advertising	120	339	459	279
Social events, food & drink, gifts	1,163	-	1,163	1,141
Domestic tours	3,039	-	3,039	-
Other specific project delivery costs	-	299	299	-
Miscellaneous	419	-	419	737
Payments for specific goods/services	518	-	518	-
Charitable donations	-	765	765	913
Cost incurred the previous year	563	-	563	0
Total expenditure	21,772	12,495	34,266	22,929
Net Surplus	21,390	1,819	23,210	13,508
Balance brought forward from last year	11,420	2,088	13,508	-
Total funds carried forward	32,810	3,908	36,718	13,508



Assets and Liabilities

The only asset held by Steel City Choristers as at 31 August 2023 was cash (including reserves), as follows:

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Last year
	£	£	£	£
Cash	15,810	3,908	19,718	6,508
Reserves	17,000	-	17,000	7,000
Total	32,810	3,908	36,718	13,508

The £3,908 restricted funds held at the end of 2022-23 are from the grant we received from Awards for All to deliver our Reasons to Sing! project. The project runs until October 2023 and hence these funds are to cover the project costs that fall in our 2023-24 financial year.

There were no liabilities and no debtors or creditors.

Payments to Trustees

No payments were made to Trustees in 2022-22 for any work conducted as Trustees.

A total of £916.17 was paid to four Trustees for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred when these could not be reasonably paid directly from the Steel City Choristers bank account.



A total of £1,338 was paid to one trustee who undertook paid work for the charity, following all necessary procedures being followed in line with charity guidance.



Declarations

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees

Signature		
Full Name	Kate Caroe	Jeremy Dawson
Position	Chair	Treasurer
Date	8 November 2023	



Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/directors/ members of

Steel City Choristers

On accounts for the year ended

31 August 2023

Charity no.:	1195909	Company no.:	
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Set out on pages

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 August 2023

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

I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination, I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

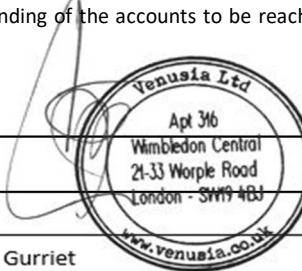
Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that:

- 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.

Signed:


[Signature]

Date:

01 November 2023

Name:

Gerald Gurriet

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

Association of International Accountants

Address:

Venusia Ltd

London, SW19 4BJ

Apt 316 Wimbledon Central, 21 – 33 Worple Road