

Sussex Chorus

Annual Report & Accounts

2018-19

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC'S REPORT

There seems no better place to start this, my first report, than by reflecting briefly on our Summer Concert, where we welcomed the excellent Hilary Cronin and nine-fingered Will Todd to join us and his band in the Chapel of Hurstpierpoint College. It was an afternoon rehearsal where everything clicked quickly into place – the addition of the drum kit, in particular, facilitating a greater sense of clarity in the chromatic harmonies and jazz-infused rhythms of the Mass in Blue. Will proved delightful to work with, offering humorous yet insightful contributions, and removing any sense of nervousness or pressure that might have otherwise been felt. I remember discussing with some of the choir how our emotions after that rehearsal were somewhat conflicted: we were hugely impressed and pleased with how things had gone, but slightly apprehensive as to whether we could repeat, and even build upon, our achievements in the concert that night. Thankfully, we needn't have worried; the choir sang with precision and energy throughout the performance, meeting – without exception – the high demands of the complex musical styles on offer. It was, of course, the culmination of several months hard work, and I was delighted that the final event did justice to the individual and collective preparation carried out by everyone involved. I thank you all for rising to the challenge so diligently and keenly, but thank especially Kate Bray, our accompanist for that term, for her excellent support throughout.

In March, the choir joined with Kent Sinfonia and soloists Jack Holton, Stephen Brown and Sophie Edwards in a spritely performance of Haydn's Creation. Although this was a work already familiar to many, I was pleased with how the choir responded to new ideas and interpretations throughout the rehearsal process. This culminated in a confident and focused final performance that was, in the words of reviewer Alison O'Gorman, energising and 'technically assured.' It was also, sadly, our final concert to involve John Walker, accompanist to the choir for nearly 42 years. I did not get the chance to work with John for long, but swiftly grew to appreciate his musical ability and understanding that together were integral to the choir's overall success. He will be missed by us all.

I look forward to the new season with excitement, and hope that there really is something for everyone in the programme for the year. It remains my commitment to challenge both choir and audience in my choice of repertoire, and Sasha Manning's Manchester Carols sees us once again perform new music by a living composer. Durufle's Requiem, meanwhile, forms the focus of our first concert in November, with Bach's St John Passion following in the spring. These each promise to be excellent events, and I hope and trust that we will attract the audience that they will doubtless deserve. We also welcome Jeremy Weaver as our new accompanist, and I look forward to working with him over the course of this year and beyond.

Along with the rest of the committee, I remain mindful of the challenges that we, like any choral society, currently face. The issue of membership and recruitment is, to me, the priority, and we must each take responsibility for finding and retaining new members. The ambitions of the choir and committee are exciting, and the opportunities on offer should make membership of the Sussex Chorus an attractive proposition. I am grateful to the committee for their work behind the scenes, but there really can be no better method than a positive recommendation from someone who sings with us already. It is therefore vital that we actively spread the word with enthusiasm, encouraging friends, family and colleagues to come along and give us a try. I end by thanking you all for your contributions to the choir, and in particular to the committee for all the crucial work they do. Next season provides us with great opportunities to grow and develop, and I continue to feel excited and privileged to be working with you all.

Jack Thompson
Director of Music
31 July 2019

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The final chords of the Mass in Blue Agnus Dei were greeted by thunderous applause from a very impressed and appreciative audience.

This brought to a close our 2018/2019 Season and what a Season it has been with many high points but some sadness.

It started early on with a successful consultation evening during which members were asked for their views on a range of topics. Following these discussions the Committee was able to draw up a new Strategy for the Choir to take it forward to 2021, the centenary year, and hopefully way beyond.

The first concert was a joint collaboration with the Sussex Symphony Orchestra and East Sussex Bach Choir of the Verdi Requiem, performed in Brighton at St Barts. As ever a very popular work and enjoyed by both performers and audience. This was Mark Andrew James final concert as MD of the Orchestra and I was very pleased that the Choir was able to be part of it. The Choir has enjoyed working with him over the years and wish him success as he embarks on new ventures.

In December, a performance in the King's Church of Messiah part 1 and other pieces brought to an end Alan Vincent's time as Director of Music.

Alan had a long association with the Choir first as Assistant Conductor and for the final 5 years as D of M. and we thanked him for all both he and his wife Carole had done for the Choir with a gift which all members had contributed to. During his time with the Choir its performances always received glowing reviews and showed that his attention to detail in rehearsal paid dividends.

Also in December a Carol evening for family and friends was held, this year with no power cuts and again proving popular with all involved.

January, a new year and a new Director of Music, Jack Thompson. I will leave it to Jack to report on his first 2 concerts with the Choir but will say how much all have enjoyed his rehearsal style and the challenge he set with the Will Todd Mass in Blue which proved to be such a great success, although I have to admit that at first I was not convinced we could adapt to the Jazz rhythms.

Much has already been said about John Walker who sadly died earlier this year.

As accompanist to the Choir for over 42 years he brought a wealth of musical knowledge and talent to not only rehearsals but also his performances accompanying the Choir at concerts.

He is greatly missed.

Now we look forward to another exciting season with familiar and not so familiar pieces, all will prove challenging. I have heard it said that as we are no longer a "big" choir some of these pieces are not possible for Sussex Chorus. I disagree and firmly believe that whilst more members would be good the choir is well placed, under Jack's guidance and with a new accompanist, to rise to any challenge and you know what comes next is still, in my opinion, not just one of the best but THE BEST.

Thank you to all who have made this a great Season.

Rob Drake
Chairman
31 July 2019

Sussex Chorus

Report and Finance Statements

Year ended 31 May 2019 Charity

No. 271678

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Legal and Administrative Information

Trustees:-

Mr R Drake	Chairman
Mrs C Wilson	Vice – Chairman
Mrs G West-Eacott	Hon. Secretary
Mr J Jalie	Hon. Treasurer (appointed 24 September 2019)
Mrs L McKay	
Mrs A Jordan	
Mrs H Woodard	
Mr R Moon	
Mrs K O'Neill	
Mr A Fox	(resigned 24 September 2019)

Acting Treasurer

Mr M West-Eacott	(resigned 24 September 2019)
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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 2019

The Trustees present their Report for the year ended 31 May 2019.

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

3 Concerts were performed in the 2018-19 season. One was held at St Bartholomew's Church, Brighton in partnership with Sussex Symphony Orchestra and the East Sussex Bach Choir, and two were held at the Kings Church in Burgess Hill. In addition a "Carol Sing-a-long" was held at St Paul's College, Burgess Hill and a number of members of the choir performed a selection of carols at Wakehurst Place in Ardingly. Concerts were promoted through posters, press advertising, our website and handouts at other concerts. The choir received a grant from Burgess Hill Town Council of £225.

Trustees and Management

The Charity was managed by Trustees listed below:

Mr R Drake	Chairman
Mrs C Wilson	Vice – Chairman
Mrs G West-Eacott	Hon. Secretary
Mr J Jalie	Hon. Treasurer (appointed 24 September 2019)
Mrs L McKay	
Mrs A Jordan	
Mrs H Woodard	
Mr R Moon	
Mrs K O'Neill	
Mr A Fox	(resigned 24 September 2019)

Acting Treasurer

Mr M West-Eacott	(resigned 24 September 2019)
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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.

Finance Review

The financial activities are detailed in the Accounts on page 5. Receipts were for the year £28,885 (2018 £27,722) and payments were £31,672 (2018 £31,428). The Charity's policy is to maintain cash resources of at least £10,000 in order to mount at least one concert in the coming season. The funds at May 2019 amounted to £8,037 (2018 £10,824). Although we have dipped below our reserves level (due to concert commitments made ahead of the 2018/19 season that would have been difficult and costly to change) the Sussex Chorus Committee have undertaken a careful budgeting exercise to ensure this position is improved in 2019/20.



On behalf of the Trustees

Mr R Drake

31 July 2019

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

I report on the accounts of Sussex Chorus for the year ended 31st May 2019 which are set out on pages 10 and 11.

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

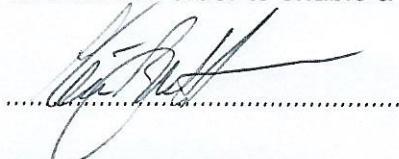
My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or 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.



Steve Brentnall FCIE
1 Meadow View Cottages
Town Littleworth
LEWES
BN8 4TH



RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MAY 2019

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2019	Total 2018
	£	£	£	£
INCOME RECEIPTS				
Receipts from Charitable Activities				
Concert receipts	7,149		7,149	6,736
Subscriptions	11,255		11,255	12,264
Income tax recovered under Gift Aid	4,854		4,854	3,043
Fundraising income	3,996		3,996	4,435
Music hire and sales	885		885	222
Friends	735		735	1,015
 Investment Income				
Bank interest	11		11	7
Total receipts	<u>28,885</u>		<u>28,885</u>	<u>27,722</u>
DIRECT CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE				
Concert expenses	(15,941)		(15,941)	(18,576)
Rehearsal fees – accompanist and conductor	(6,504)		(6,504)	(6,655)
Rehearsal fees – hire of school room and church hall	(1,937)		(1,937)	(1,767)
Publicity	(3,474)		(3,474)	(2,308)
Music purchase/hire	(916)		(916)	(281)
Administration and retirement gifts	-		-	(487)
Sundry costs	(2,377)		(2,377)	(846)
OTHER EXPENDITURE				
Making music subscription and other subscriptions	523		523	(508)
Total payments	<u>(31,672)</u>		<u>(31,672)</u>	<u>(31,428)</u>
NET RECEIPTS/(PAYMENTS) FOR THE YEAR	<u>(2,787)</u>		<u>(2,787)</u>	<u>(3,706)</u>
 Bank balances at 1 st June 2018			10,824	14,530
Bank balances at 31 May 2019			<u>8,037</u>	<u>10,824</u>

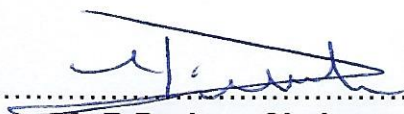
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31ST MAY 2019

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2019	Total 2018
	£	£	£	£
MONETARY ASSETS				
Bank balances:				
CAF Cash account	1,000		1,000	1,000
CAF Gold account	7,037		7,037	9,824
Bank balances	8,037		8,037	10,824

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.

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 July 2019

