

Trustees Report For First Annual General Meeting 25th May 2021

Sing Healthy Choirs - CIO
registered in England and Wales,
charity no. 1194226

Introduction

The trustees are delighted that Sing Healthy Choirs is now a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). After a lengthy process of application, the Charity Commission advised on 26th April that we have satisfied their criteria and have been entered onto the Register with the Registered Charity Number 1194226. This is a big step in the evolution of Sing Healthy and carries with it a number of obligations. Our first is to hold an Annual General Meeting to elect and confirm the trustees in post and we are pleased to provide a report that summarises the charity's activities both looking back and forward.

Music!

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Kieran and Louise have managed to sustain us with an entertaining and varied collection of music, rehearsal formats and recorded pieces. We are very lucky to have two talented and committed individuals and the trustees are hugely appreciative of the effort that they have both made.

It is hard to think back to the early days of the pandemic in March 2020, immediately following the cancellation of the Faure Requiem concert, but within a fortnight we were up and running with virtual rehearsals. The planned concert by Bracknell choir of show tunes was also cancelled. Instead, both choirs learnt uplifting summer repertoire and nervously made some virtual recordings.

September brought the advent of outdoor rehearsals for both choirs under a covered area at St Crispin's School, Wokingham. This proved to be an excellent venue (albeit a bit cold on occasion) and reminded us all how enjoyable it was to be back singing together. Fantastic efforts were put in by the "technical and support team" to set up the equipment and create a Covid-secure rehearsal space every Monday and Wednesday - thank you to them.

November saw our "virtual concert" to raise money for Create Hope which far exceeded expectations, thanks to the generosity of all who watched on-line.

Both choirs learnt Christmas repertoire and our only physical performance occurred in December at RHS Wisley as part of their Glow Illuminations event where a valiant choir of well wrapped up singers sang a collection of carols.

Christmas also saw the release of The Lockdown EP and our virtual recording of 'O come all Ye Faithful' which closed BBC Berkshire's Christmas Day carol service.

Since January 2021, we have continued in lockdown with rehearsals on Zoom and learnt a series of choral highlights with a view to performing in some shape or form. We have continued with virtual recordings, trying out different technology to synchronise all our contributions, with thanks to Kieran and Louise for their technical skills. We should add that several of our songs have been beautiful specific arrangements created by Louise for Sing Healthy Choirs.

It's been a full and varied year and choir members have adapted very well to the changes and restrictions imposed by the pandemic. We are looking forward to the progressive return of normality in whatever form that might be.

As a reminder here are the pieces that the choirs have sung since March 2020 (virtual performance recordings in bold).

Bracknell	Wokingham
My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose Rhythm of Life Viva La Vida Let it Go One Love Lean on Me Bring Me Sunshine Stand by Me Both Sides Now A Million Dreams Here, There and Everywhere Don't Think Twice, It's All Right The Seal Lullaby Leonard Cohen – Hallelujah Kiss from a Rose Scarborough Fair Wellerman Sea Shanty Take Me Home, Country Roads	Faure Requiem Ubi Caritas Gounod – Ave Verum Corpus Calmes Des Nuits As Torrents in Summer Why Fum'th in Fight Non Nobis Domine Zadok the Priest Elgar - Serenade Vivaldi – Gloria Elgar - Agnus Dei (Nimrod) Mozart Ave Verum Corpus Locus Iste The Crown of Roses Handel - For Unto Us A Child Is Born God so loved the World Let us all go Maying Panis Angelicus Jesu Rex Admirabilis
Joint	
Down to the river, Stranger in Paradise , O Holy Night, Let it Snow, Deck the Halls, The Boar's Head Carol, Kings of Orient, While Shepherds, O Come all ye Faithful , (We wish you) A Merry Christmas, Eriskay Love Lilt , Amazing Grace , How can I keep from Singing?	

Constitution and Policies

A requirement of being a CIO is to have in place a number of critical governance control mechanisms and policies. Key amongst these is the Constitution which lays out the objectives of the charity and how the charity is run. We have two objects which can be summarised as:

- a) the promotion of music in all its aspects for the public benefit
 - b) the support of other charitable activities through donations
- (the actual wording in the document is necessarily more complex!).

Ours is a Membership organisation and you are welcome to view the Constitution. As members, we all have a duty to do our best to further the purposes of the choirs. To support the Constitution we have had to create and formalise a number of policies including:

Statement of financial controls

Donations Policy

Safeguarding Policy

GDPR and Data Protection (in progress)

These policies will need to be followed by everyone working as part of Sing Healthy in any paid or volunteer role.

Volunteers

As part of the progression of Sing Healthy, the trustees are keen that we have an “army” of volunteers from within the membership to spread the load and help run the choir activities – we loosely call this the “Operational Committee” – the people who get things done! We also know there is a wealth of talent and experience amongst our membership that is available if we just ask. We are pleased to say that a number of people have stepped forward and we are very grateful to them. At present the Operational Committee comprises:

Musical Directors	Louise Drewett and Kieran Morris
Membership Secretary	Ann Stainton
Quartermaster, stores and equipment	Paul Dunn
Publicity/PR Co-Ordinator	Mike Hardman
Choir uniform/clothing	Marilyn Chalke
Music	Jane Dier and Jo Robinson
Events Co-ordinator	Gill Coulson
Events support	Nicky Nicholson

Do please contact any of us if you think there is some aspect where you can offer help – it will always be welcome. (Even the quizzes this year were much enlivened by different people presenting rounds of the weird and wonderful!)

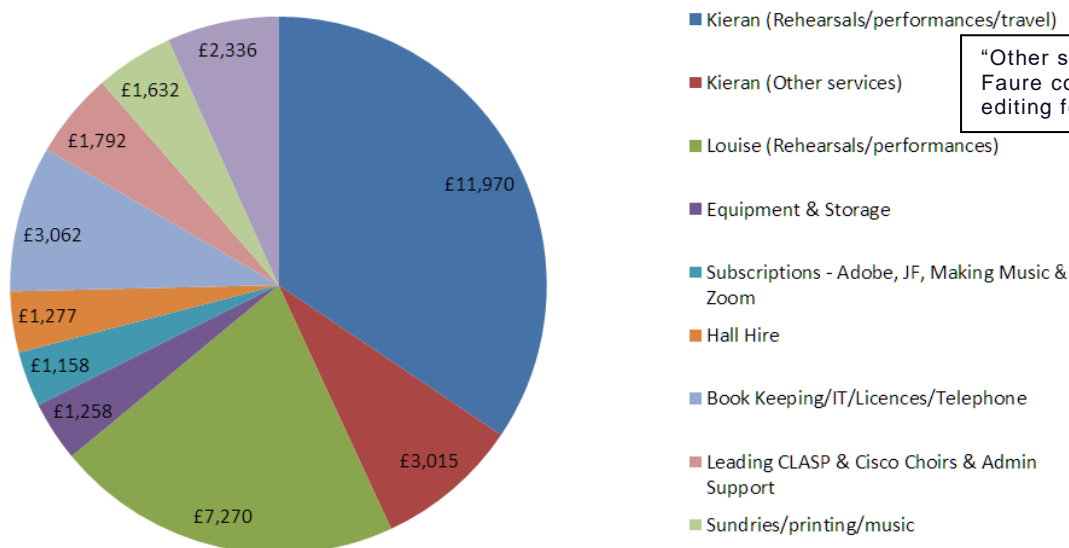
CLASP

We have continued to support the CLASP choir, who since the start of the pandemic, have been having singing sessions every fortnight under the excellent leadership of Brenda Jenner and subsequently David Raeside. We are immensely grateful to them both. The singing has also been supported by a regular set of Sing Healthy members and the sessions have proved to be most uplifting in these difficult days. We very much hope to stay in close contact with CLASP into the future and would welcome any volunteers that would like to lead or support the CLASP choir.

Financial Summary

The Sing Healthy financial year runs January to December so we are well into the 2021 financial year. Looking back, the financial year 2020 was heavily impacted by the pandemic, not least by the late cancellation of the Wokingham Choir performance of the Faure Requiem. Costs had been incurred and while the year overall showed a slight increase in the bank balance of approximately £1,200, this included around £1,700 of ticket sales income for a performance that did not happen. The trustees decided that this uncertainty needed to be resolved and everyone who purchased tickets was approached by email to ask whether they wished to receive a refund or whether they wished to make a donation. We are very pleased that the large majority of purchases were donated. (If any members who did not receive the email on refunds/donations wish to have a refund, please contact any of the trustees.)

The chart below provides a breakdown of expenditure for 2020:



"Other services" include some items of the Faure concert costs, the audio/video editing for virtual performances.

The extended period of suspension of in-person rehearsals meant that the member income declined in 2021 and the trustees have had to take some actions to reduce costs to prevent a loss-making situation. The trustees are hugely grateful to Kieran and Louise for agreeing to a reduction in their rehearsal fees while we wait for member numbers to recover later in the year. Through our cost-saving actions and forward planning, we are confident that we can maintain our financial position for the end of the year.

Recently supported charities have been MacMillan Cancer Support and Sebastian's Action Trust (2019 Christmas concert) and Create Hope (Virtual Concert in 2020)



One of the benefits of becoming a charity is the ability to reclaim Gift Aid on subscriptions for anyone who is paying income tax. We need consent from members to be able to do this so please keep an eye out for communications explaining Gift Aid and requesting your consent. The value is significant from a financial perspective and will help us to fund events into the future.

Outlook for the choirs

Looking forward, we are all waiting for the day when we can come back and enjoy singing together. We are closely following Government guidance and updates for choirs and are hoping to return to in-person rehearsals after 17th May, but the restrictions mean that this will be outdoors in sections as we had last autumn. The covered area at St Crispin's School is very well suited to this type of rehearsal and we have been unable to find a similar location under cover in Bracknell. For the time being, therefore, we anticipate that both choirs will meet at St Crispin's until the next step later in June which will allow Bracknell choir to return to Birch Hill Community Centre.

We are planning for a summer event where both choirs can perform a range of pieces to friends and family. We are also starting to look further ahead to see what other events might be possible. Clearly we are in the midst of uncertainty and are being cautious about planning too far ahead. The trustees are working closely with Kieran and Louise on what might be possible.

In terms of other priorities, we are looking to recover member numbers as quickly as possible. We hope our suspended members will join us again when we can meet in person and aim to recruit new members through a publicity campaign in the local magazines/periodicals. We also want to reach out through you, our membership, to help us to recruit new members and you can expect to see some further communication on this very soon. We feel that one of the few benefits of the pandemic is a recognition of the importance of socialising with other people in enjoyable, uplifting activities and that is what Sing Healthy is all about.

The establishment of the trustee governance structure does now allow us to take a more strategic approach on how Sing Healthy progresses. There will be more on this once we are past the current challenges of the pandemic.

Overall we have a very positive view of the status of Sing Healthy Choirs and believe we are well placed to continue the legacy left by our founder, Dorian Edwards, and by Chris Edwards to date.

Thanks

We wish to record our thanks to the people who have helped to keep us rolling over this last year or so:

Kieran and Louise for their musical leadership and excellence
Andrew Morris for his piano playing in lockdown (especially happy birthday renditions)
Technical Team - Paul Dunn, Nigel and Paul Barlow, Kieth Naylor for setting up at St Crispin's
Brenda Jenner and David Raeside for their leadership of CLASP
Chris Wright – for managing all our website/computing activities
Sarah Occleshaw – for helping with our financial management
Ann Stainton – for her membership secretary activities, getting us to charity status and being queen of the coloured cones and 2m measuring
Marilyn Chalke – front desk and general membership support, Wokingham Choir
Nicky Nicholson – front desk and membership support, Bracknell Choir
Ros Drewett for the support she provides to Louise and Kieran
Alison Strickland – for all her support for choirs behind the scenes
Sue Taylor – for looking after the Bracknell music
And of course to all friends of Sing Healthy who support our concerts and events

Finally to Chris Edwards who has guided the establishment of the trustee structure to this point. We shall miss him and very much hope that he and the Edwards family will stay in close contact with Sing Healthy Choirs.

Trustees:

Chairman: Chris Edwards (Chris.Edwards@singhealthy.co.uk)
Treasurer: Ann Shaw (Ann.Shaw@singhealthy.co.uk)
Secretary: Lynn Marshall (Lynn.Marshall@singhealthy.co.uk)
Wokingham Choir: Mike Gale (Mike.Gale@singhealthy.co.uk)
Bracknell Choir: Barry Utting (Barry.Utting@singhealthy.co.uk)
Co-opted Trustee: Ann Stainton (Ann.Stainton@singhealthy.co.uk)