



# **LOWER WINDRUSH CHORAL SOCIETY**

## **TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT For the period 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018**

The Trustees are pleased to present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ending 31 August 2018. This report is to be presented at the Annual General Meeting to be held at Stanton Harcourt CE Primary School, Stanton Harcourt, Witney Oxon OX29 5RJ on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 8.00 pm.

## Section A: Reference and administration details

**Charity name:** Lower Windrush Choral Society

**Registered charity number:** 1152661

**Charity's principal address:** Oaklea House  
41a Netherton Road  
Appleton, Abingdon  
Oxon OX13 5JZ

**Trustees who have managed the charity during the year:**

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted as Trustee, if not for whole year (1.9.17 – 31.8.18)
Jennifer Macdonald	Chairman	
Bellanne Lethbridge	Secretary since AGM 27.11.17	Since AGM 27.11.17
Diana Gordon	Treasurer	
Andrew Grainger		Since AGM 27.11.17
Felicity Aitken		1.9.17 – 27.11.17 (AGM)
Pamela Breeze	Secretary until AGM 27.11.7	
Jane Dodds		
Helen Feasey		
Jennifer Insch		
Susan Lakie		
Terence McNamara	Music Director	
Christopher Sawyers		

## Section B: Structure, governance and management

**Governing document:** Constitution of Lower Windrush Choral Society, March 2013

**How the charity is constituted:** As an Association

**Trustee selection method:** Election by members at the Annual General Meeting

## Section C: Objectives and activities

**Objects of the Society set out in its constitution:**

The charity's objects are:

- (1) to advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects by any means the trustees see fit, including through the presentation of public concerts and recitals;
- (2) to further such charitable purpose or purposes as the trustees in their absolute discretion shall think fit but in particular through the making of grants and donations.

**Main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects:**

Our main activity is the performance and promotion of choral music. In planning the Society's activities, the Trustees have kept in mind the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

## Section D: Achievements and performance

### Concerts and performances

During the year 1 September to 31 August, the Society sang at the following events:

**November 2017:** This concert saw something of a departure from the Society's usual repertoire and format, and was reminiscent (for those who remembered it) of an LWCS concert called *Wine, Women & Song* performed in 1997. The programme this time was entitled *Love from Byrd to Bernstein*, and it consisted of an eclectic mix of works on the theme of love with composers ranging from Handel, through Bernstein, to Gilbert & Sullivan and Flanders & Swann, with the finale being a choral medley from *West Side Story*. In keeping with the generally lighter-hearted music, the Committee chose the extremely well appointed Stanton Harcourt Village Hall as the venue. This meant that the room could be arranged 'café-style', and we were able to offer a cash bar, thereby adding to the general conviviality. The programme for the concert commented that the more modern pieces had taken some members of the choir (and indeed the Music Director) outside their normal comfort zone, but it seemed clear that many choir members thoroughly enjoyed the change. Whatever the choir-members' views, the concert drew in a slightly different (and very appreciative) audience, including more youngsters than usual, and the Hall was virtually full.

**June 2018:** June's concert proved to be quite an undertaking, but worth it! Handel's splendid oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus* was the choice, but it presented considerable challenges of varying types. Firstly, it's long so that, even with some judicious cuts by the Music Director, there was a lot of music for choir-members to master – and, on the day, a lot of time standing up. Secondly, it was to be performed with four soloists and accompanied by a nine-piece orchestra, plus the MD directing from the harpsichord, so it was expensive to put on (see Commentary on Financial Statement on p6). Thirdly, because of the length of the piece, it required not only a choir-and-orchestra rehearsal on the concert day, but also a morning rehearsal for the orchestra, and this imposed additional catering requirements. The Committee decided to book Witney Methodist Church for this event, in preference to St Mary's Church; this was because the Methodist Church is able to seat more people comfortably and with good sightlines, and it has better catering, changing and toilet facilities. The only slight drawback (at least for some of the choir and audience) was that, owing to the Methodist Church's strict rules on alcohol, the bar in the interval was limited to soft drinks only! Again, ticket sales were gratifyingly high, despite some early worries, and very positive feedback was received from the audience about the performance.

### Other achievements and activities

Membership numbers fluctuated between 46 and 52, which was comparable to the previous year.

The 'small choir' has continued to meet approximately monthly during 2017-18 at Cokethorpe School. Although it has not performed in public in that period, members have been preparing for a fund-raising concert at St Mary's Church, Witney in November 2018, when they will be performing with members of the church choir. The activities of the small choir continue to be self-funding, i.e. with no subsidy from main choir funds.

The Autumn Term was extended by two weeks in 2017-18, finishing mid-December rather than after the November AGM. Historically, the early finishing date had been to accommodate those several choir-members who were involved in rehearsals for the Northmoor Christmas Eve services, but this was no longer necessary and the Trustees took the view that members could profitably use two more rehearsal sessions.

'Summer Sings' have continued, with two sessions taking place at Northmoor during the summer break. We have tried to encourage new people to try us out at these sessions. Although, this year, they did not yield any new members, the Summer Sings nevertheless provide a welcome opportunity for some members to meet up and sing new and different pieces, just for fun. A normal rehearsal date in January was also designated as an open rehearsal, with recruitment in mind.

Reading scores at concerts in sometimes inadequate lighting is not always easy, and following research into possibilities for additional stage lighting, the Trustees purchased four 'parcan' lights and two lighting stands for concert use. They also authorised the purchase of a director's music stand for concerts; its 'double-desk' allows easy and tidy storage of several scores. Although staging was also investigated, the Trustees concluded that, as it appeared that Witney Methodist Church looked set to become the Society's venue of choice, this was not needed, at least at present.

During the year, a working party has been active in developing a new website for the Society, which went live shortly after the end of the year under review in this Report. This has the new domain name of [www.lowerwindrush.org](http://www.lowerwindrush.org), thus shedding the rather corporate feel of the previous .co.uk name. The Committee is enormously grateful to choir-member Jonathan Harvey for his input into this process, and in particular for his technical expertise in setting up the new site.

Notable progress has been made on several administrative/organisational matters. Following the elections of Trustees last November, job descriptions were drawn up and agreed with them for the roles that they would perform in the year ahead. The intention is to keep these job descriptions updated as a way to brief new Trustees as they join – an important element of succession planning. During the year, the Trustees have also introduced welcome packs for new choir-members, and has agreed and issued revised guidelines for choir-members (and agreed some guidance, which will appear on the new website, to help enquirers decide whether or not LWCS is appropriate for them).

Along with many organisations, the Society has been looking into its responsibilities under the new General Data Protection Regulations, and will be issuing a Privacy Policy shortly. Fortunately, we collect and store very little personal information, and none of it is of a sensitive nature.

Following brief discussion at the last AGM of the possibility of a change of name for the Society, choir-members were canvassed informally about this, and it emerged that there was no enthusiasm for the idea. So the Trustees have not pursued it.

On the social side, there was again a well-attended New Year party at the home of Jack & Diana Gordon, including what has become the customary light-hearted musical interlude. In July, Jane & Chris Dodds kindly hosted what was intended as an evening garden party, but as the weather had different ideas they generously let attendees in the house. The Trustees are most grateful to both sets of hosts.

What would we do without our Music Director? The fact that we have such a loyal following of members is undoubtedly closely connected with the high quality of our MD. Terry continues to surprise even us in the sound he manages to coax out of this amateur choir, and we are enormously grateful to him for his knowledge, skill, humour and patience. To Roger Clarke, our accompanist, we also extend our grateful thanks.

Once again, the Trustees would like to record their thanks to the many members of the Society (and to some of their family-members) who continue to help with the wide range of jobs that need doing, both as part of the weekly cycle of rehearsals and as part of organising concerts. The list is long and it would be invidious to select examples, but we thank you all.

## **Section E: Financial review**

The detailed financial statement is shown on the next page.

**LOWER WINDRUSH CHORAL SOCIETY**  
**RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 1 SEPTEMBER 2017 TO 31 AUGUST 2018**

Section A Receipts and payments

	2017 - 18		2016 - 17	
	Payments	Receipts	Payments	Receipts
<b>Receipts</b>				
Members' subscriptions		6,118.75		4,978.75
Small choir - members' subs, donations & other income (see note 1)		850.00		845.00
Donations received - non-concert		142.80		176.00
Gift Aid reclaimed		1,031.26		962.67
Easyfundraising & GiveAsYou Live income		299.23		199.11
Raffles - net income		75.00		155.00
<i>Concerts:</i>				
Concert ticket sales		3,174.00		3,043.00
Concert programme income		95.90		80.00
Concert - bar/refreshment income		378.80		136.47
Concert - donations & sponsorship to Society		1,240.00		10.00
<i>Exceptional item:</i>				
Choir visit to Langres - income from those participating		-		3,880.00
<b>Payments</b>				
<i>Rehearsals:</i>				
Professional fees & expenses (main choir)	4,862.80		4,754.80	
Rehearsal venue hire (main choir)	760.00		760.00	
Music hire/purchase - net cost after members' payments	128.80		21.23	
Small choir - professional fees, venue costs and other expenses	545.19		883.77	
<i>Concerts:</i>				
MD, soloists & instrumentalists - fees, expenses, gifts, scores	3,873.69		2,511.02	
Venue costs	346.00		250.00	
Equipment costs	455.00		-	
Programme costs	79.00		64.85	
Bar/refreshment costs	233.07		75.00	
Performing Rights Society fees	82.21		67.83	
Publicity	157.62		70.48	
Cancellation insurance	48.00		-	
Miscellaneous expenses	172.80		32.16	
<i>Other expenses:</i>				
Capital expenditure (see note 2)	628.67		-	
Administrative expenses	48.22		57.61	
Website fees (see note 3)	198.03		113.38	
Making Music subscription (see note 4)	130.00		190.00	
Insurance (excl cancellation cover for concerts)	43.00		42.00	
Social expenses	237.77		148.38	
<i>Exceptional items:</i>				
Choir visit to Langres - travel costs & minor miscellaneous expenses	-		3,891.57	
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>13,405.74</b>		<b>14,466.00</b>
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>13,029.87</b>		<b>13,934.08</b>	
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>		<b>375.87</b>		<b>531.92</b>

**Notes:**

1. Taking into account small choir income & expenses in previous years, the running total surplus on its activities was £324.94 as at 31.8.18
2. Costs of 'parcan' lights and stands for concerts, plus MD's music stand
3. Have been running two sites, whilst new one under development
4. Making Music sub decreased because sub based on Society income, and LWCS moved into lower income bracket.

Net reserves at 31 August 2017	6,234.46
Add surplus for 2017-18	375.87
<b>Net reserves as at 31 August 2018</b>	<b>6,610.33</b>

**REPRESENTED BY:**

Assets

Cash in hand	49.22
Barclays Bank account	6,736.66
	<b>6,785.88</b>

Less creditor:

D Webb (uncashed cheque)	-175.55
--------------------------	---------

<b>AVAILABLE ASSETS</b>	<b>6,610.33</b>
-------------------------	-----------------

**Commentary on financial statement:**

Once more this year, the Society's finances are in a healthy state, with the accounts for 2017-18 showing a small surplus of £375.87.

At the beginning of the year, subscriptions were raised for the first time in four years in the knowledge that the year ahead would bring not only some increased recurrent costs and an expensive *Judas Maccabaeus* concert, but also probably some capital expenditure. The Trustees had planned for the fact that, even taking account of the increased subscription rates, the year would end with a significant deficit. This would have meant using some of the Society's healthy reserves, but by no means to any dangerous extent. As mentioned above, there was capital expenditure on lighting and a music stand, and these cost a total of £628. Part-way through the year, and given increasing estimates of costs for the *Judas Maccabaeus* concert, the Trustees decided to mount a campaign to attract grants and sponsorship for it, offering donors the opportunity to sponsor a particular 'seat' amongst the soloists and orchestra. This attracted five sponsors (four corporate and one personal). Adding in grants from West Oxfordshire District Council and Witney Town Council, an unexpectedly high figure of £1200 was raised, so that the overall eventual loss on that specific concert was only about £1000. (By contrast, the *Love from Byrd to Bernstein* concert in November made a surplus of about £500.)

The Trustees are very grateful for the generosity of all our donors, personal and corporate, large and small.



**Reserves policy:**

The policy of the Trustees is to maintain such a level of reserves as will ensure the long-term viability of the Society and enable it to continue to fulfil its objects for the foreseeable future. No part of the reserves of the Society is restricted to any particular purpose.

**Section F: Declaration**

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

**Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees:**

<b>Signatures</b>		
<b>Name</b>	Jennifer Macdonald	Bellanne Lethbridge
<b>Position</b>	Chairman	Secretary

**Date** 6/11/18