



Annual Report and Accounts

2022-23

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Background & History

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society performs major choral and other works in Wells Cathedral several times a year – and sponsors a "Come and Sing" day in the spring of most years.

It can trace its existence back to at least 1863 as the “Wells Music Association” – and during the 20th century it joined forces with the Street, Shepton Mallet and Wedmore Musical Societies.

The chorus is drawn from a wide area in Somerset and is one of the leading choral societies in the South West of England.

The Society contributes significantly to the cultural life of Wells and the surrounding area, and we are proud of our efforts to reach out to all music lovers through a wide choice of music, some of which is rarely heard.

Our Come and Sing Day provides for those local and other singers from further afield to come and enjoy with us perhaps a new opportunity and experience in choral singing and is much appreciated.

Objects of the Society

The Society is a registered charity – which, despite its name, is independent of Wells Cathedral. The Society’s objects, as defined in its Constitution, are:

- To educate the public in the art and science of music and, in particular, the art and science of choral music – by the presentation of choral concerts and other related activities.
- To assist and further such charitable institutions and purposes as the Committee shall from time to time determine.

Public benefit

The Committee (whose members are the Trustees of the charity) have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on “public benefit” published by the Charity Commission when exercising their powers and duties.

Management

The Committee of the Society makes arrangements for concerts and other related events and management of the Society's affairs and the control of finance.

Committee members are drawn from the membership of the Society and stand for election every year. Committee members who served at the end of the period are listed on Page 12.

The Committee is ably supported by specialist volunteers to whom we extend our appreciation – also listed on Page 12 .

Review of the year

Chairman's report

Review of the season 2022/2023

The 2022-23 season has been busy with various changes and additions to our usual schedule of concerts. Returning to rehearsals in October 2022 meant our first actual concert of the season was the December Messiah which proved to be a tremendous success. Whilst having a full cathedral was wonderful the lengthy queues to attend the concert were not ideal and the committee are exploring ways with the cathedral events team to prevent this situation reoccurring.

As always it was a privilege to perform with the Music for Awhile orchestra led by Maggie Faultless.

This event was tinged with sadness as it was to be Jeremy Coles' final concert with WCOS as he was leaving Wells to explore pastures new. Jeremy was thanked for the excellent work he did with the choir and a warm welcome was extended to Alexander Hamilton appointed as Acting Director of Music. We are grateful to the cathedral who kindly arranged for Alexander to be temporarily relieved of responsibility for managing the Cathedral Chamber choir and free his busy schedule to allow him time to act as conductor of WCOS.

2022/23 season

The Rutter Magnificat & Faure Requiem were performed in March 2023 successfully led by Alexander Hamilton.

Not having had a concert in November and to ensure the choir had the opportunity to perform three concerts for the season an invitation was accepted to participate in the cathedrals Sound of Wells weekend in May 2023 performing a selection of music to celebrate the coronation.

A "Come & Sing" event rehearsing and performing Verdi's Requiem led by conductor Nigel Perrin was held in the cathedral on June 3rd closely followed by a final performance of a Proms style event on behalf of the Friends of Wells cathedral on June 9th to help celebrate their 90th anniversary.

The collaboration between WCOS, the music foundation and Friends of the Cathedral proved to be very successful and much appreciated by the Friends.

Future concerts

Looking to the future the Committee recognised the choir's desire to return to a regular season of concerts running from September to March. With that in mind rehearsals are planned to resume in September 2023 to rehearse a selection of choral classics to be performed in November followed by a performance of the Messiah in December.

For March 2024 arrangements are underway to perform the much loved Elgar's Dream of Gerontius.

Although tentative plans are being made for the 2024/25 season this may be influenced by the cathedrals plans to recruit and appoint a new, permanent Director of Music in 2024.

Committee

A huge thanks go to all the committee and assistant committee members and to Jeremy and Alexander for their hard work planning, organising and successfully achieving a very busy schedule and year of singing. They have been a pleasure to work with and their knowledge and expertise has been much appreciated.

In addition, thanks goes to those choir members who kindly volunteered to assist with various events such as the choir socials and Come & Sing. None of these could have happened without their input.

The committee is fortunate to have new volunteers such as Louise Burton who has a background in journalism and has offered to manage publicity and program development. The post was previously held by Della Menday who retired in March 2023 having served on the committee for 11 years managing publicity. Our thanks go to Della for all her hard work.

Chair

It is also my time as chairman to say a farewell and thank you particularly to the choir members who have given tremendous support during the past unusual and challenging 5 years.

We are very fortunate that Peter Lawrence has volunteered to take up this position, to lead the choir forward for the future – and we wish him every success.

Marion

MEMBERSHIP

The numbers of choir members attending rehearsal and singing during the year were as follows:

December 2022	<i>Messiah</i>	103	
March 2023	<i>Rutter/Fauré concert</i>	119	
May 2023	<i>Sound of Wells – Zadok</i>	119	*
June 2023	<i>Wells Night at the Proms</i>	57	*

NOTE () The May & June concerts were “optional extras” to support the Cathedral.*

At the of the 2022-23 season the total numbers of members was as follows:

Voice	Count
Soprano	39
Alto	49
Tenor	15
Bass	20
Total	123

During the year 9 new members joined or rejoined the Society.

Apart from musical considerations (e.g. balance between parts) membership subscriptions are an important part of the Society’s income.

CONCERTS & EVENTS

The number of tickets sold for each concert & event during the year was as follows:

Concert	Music	Audience	Capacity	%	Profit/ (Loss)	Notes
December 2022	Messiah	774	839	92%	£159	
March 2023	Fauré/Rutter	385	836	46%	(£5,957)	
May 2023	“Sound of Wells” coronation anthems etc				(£1,102)	(a)
Come & Sing 2023	Nigel Perrin	123	400	31%	(£321)	

Notes:

(a) WCOS incurred some expenses for the May 2023 “Sound of Wells” concert, but did not sell tickets or receive any income.

PUBLICITY

The main publicity media used during the year have been personal recommendations by members, posters in public places (e.g. shop windows, libraries, churches, notice boards etc) and free advertisements in local press.

In addition the Cathedral Box Office ensures our concerts are advertised alongside their other events on a variety of websites and the Dean helps ensure our concerts are promoted in the Cathedral Newsletter.

The Society made increasing use of its Facebook page during the year, including some paid promotions – and of its email mailing list.

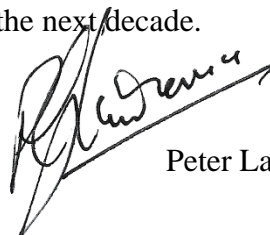
Unfortunately we have not been able to access the email addresses of ticket buyers since we started using the Cathedral’s Eventbrite system.

FUTURE PLANS

In making plans for the next season (2022-23 and beyond) the Committee has endeavoured to balance the ambition to present attractive concerts with the Society’s limited financial resources, a change of conductor and the general economic situation in the country – whilst maintaining the high standards that the choir is known for.

To this end Peter Lawrence, our new Chair, has initiated consultations with members and others about the direction the choir should aim for the next decade.

For and on behalf of the Trustees



Peter Lawrence, Acting Chair

FINANCIAL REPORT

Accounting system & reporting basis

During the year the Society's accounts were transferred from a manual Excel system to a widely-used online system called "Xero".

Also during the year the Committee agreed to return to the "accruals" basis, where income and expense items are posted when they are due, rather than when they are paid (which can be weeks or months later). This provides a clearer picture of the state of the Society's finances at any time.

(The net impact on the accounts for 2021-22 of this change was small – i.e. the "late" receipts and payments balanced out to within £160.)

Income & Expenditure

Income for the year to 30th June 2023 was £53,839 and Expenditure was £43,547, resulting in a surplus for the whole year of £10,292.

This surplus is added to the Reserves built up in previous years (amounting to £14,234 at the beginning of the year) – increasing the Reserves at the end of the year to £24,526.

This compares well to the Society's target reserves of £22,000 (see Page 11 below).

Income

The main sources of income were:

	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2021-22</u>
Ticket sales	£29,868	£15,565
Membership subscriptions	£14,005	£15,174
Friends subscriptions	£1,115	£1,077
Gift Aid on subscriptions above	£4,051	£4,203

Income from ticket sales increased substantially compared to the previous year – when the Messiah was performed free of charge.

Expenditure

The main items of expenditure on concerts & events during the year were:

Orchestras	£15,647
Other musicians' fees (conductor, accompanist, soloists etc)	£11,711
Rehearsal, venues, commission, music hire etc	£12,251
Publicity	£1,033

(The amount spent on "Publicity" (i.e. printing posters & flyers) is relatively small, and could be increased if it would result in more ticket sales.)

There was also "overhead" (i.e. non-Concert) expenditure totalling £2,017 – which includes web site hosting, public liability insurance, postage etc.

Reserves

At 30th June 2023 the Society's Reserves were £24,526 (i.e. cash in the bank, adjusted for outstanding invoices and receipts)

Statement of Financial Activities

	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2021-22 RESTATED</u>
Incoming resources		
Donations and Legacies		
Donations	67	405
Subscriptions	15,120	16,054
Tax refunds	4,051	4,203
<i>Sub-Total</i>	19,238	20,662
Income from Charitable Activities		
Concerts and Events	34,232	23,988
Miscellaneous	34	1,296
<i>Sub-Total</i>	34,266	25,284
Fund Generating Activity		
Fundraising	120	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	120	0
Investment Income		
Bank Interest	215	30
<i>Sub-Total</i>	215	30
Total incoming resources	53,839	45,976
Resources expended		
Cost of Fund Generation		
Fundraising	43	
<i>Sub-Total</i>	43	
Expenditure on charitable activities		
Concerts and Events	41,487	59,465
<i>Sub-Total</i>	41,487	59,465
Other Resources Expended		
General expenses	2,017	664
<i>Sub-Total</i>	2,017	664
Total resources expended	43,547	60,129
Net income/(expenditure)	10,292	(14,153)
Investment gains/losses	0	0
Extraordinary items	0	0
Transfers between funds	0	0
Other recognised gains/(losses)	0	0
Net movement in funds	10,292	(14,153)
Reconciliation of funds		
Total funds brought forward	14,234	28,387
Net movement in funds	10,292	(14,153)
Total funds carried forward	24,526	14,234

Concert / Event Analysis

	2022-12 Messiah	2023-03 Rutter Fauré	2023-05 Zadok	2023-06 Come & Sing	Total
Income					
Ticket Sales (Gross)	18,140	11,728			29,868
C&S Attendees				3,175	3,175
Programme Sales	506	13			519
Members' Music Hire		310	360		670
Other concert/event income (inc Donations)				34	34
Total Income	18,646	12,051	360	3,209	34,266
Expenses					
Orchestra	7,750	7,100	153	644	15,647
Soloists	3,200	650		1,200	5,050
Conductor fee	2,087	3,034		750	5,871
Cathedral choir	275	240	275		790
Performing Right fee		663		183	846
Rehearsal costs	754	1,902	558		3,214
Cathedral charges	2,797	2,472			5,269
Publicity	397	529		106	1,032
Music hire		503	476	378	1,357
Other concert/event costs (inc Catering)	52	88		80	220
Programme Print	88	122			210
Ticket Sales Commission	1,088	704		189	1,981
Total expenses	18,488	18,007	1,462	3,530	41,487
Surplus / (Deficit)	158	(5,956)	(1,102)	(321)	(7,221)

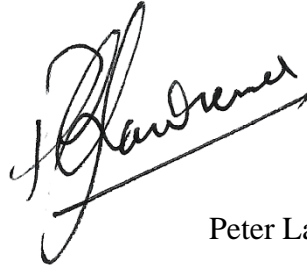
Balance Sheet

	<u>30th June 2023</u>	<u>30th June 2022 RESTATED</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>	£	£
Current Assets		
Lloyds "Treasurers"	3,838	474
Lloyds "Business Bank Instant"	21,241	108
COIF "Charities Deposit Fund" (Note 1)	0	13,501
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<i>Total Cash at bank and in hand</i>	25,079	14,083
Accounts Receivable	293	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Current Assets	25,372	14,083
<u>LIABILITIES</u>		
Current Liabilities		
Creditors: Accruals	846	151
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	846	151
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Current Liabilities	846	151
NET ASSETS (LIABILITIES)	24,526	14,234
Representing:		
General, unrestricted reserve (Note 2)	£24,526	£14,234

NOTES:

1. The COIF account was closed during the year and the balance transferred to Lloyds accounts
2. All the Society's activities & income are within a general, unrestricted fund.
3. Transactions with Trustees during the year were as follows:
 - a. Reimbursements of WCOS expenses items that had to be paid by card, e.g. Public Liability Insurance, Music Library fees.
 - b. Marion Robinson (ex-Chair) loaned £880 to the Society in December 2022 to cover a short term cash flow issue – this loan was repaid by the Society a few weeks later.

For and on behalf of the Trustees



Peter Lawrence, Acting Chair

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS.

Basis of Accounting

These accounts have been prepared on the Accruals basis – meaning that income and expenditure transactions are accounted for on the due date in each financial year.

Comparative figures for 2021-22 have been restated on the same basis.

Reserves Policy

The Committee reviews the level of Reserves from time to time to ensure it has enough funds to ensure its future, whilst not accumulating unnecessarily large balances. The Committee takes the view that the minimum level of Reserves should:

- (a) provide a short-term cash flow buffer for the first concert in each season, e.g. to book an orchestra and soloists – before membership subscriptions and Gift Aid have been received.
The Committee’s assessment of the minimum currently required for this is £15,000.
- (b) provide for a loss on concerts greater than forecast, for example catastrophic ticket sales after all expenses have been incurred, e.g. rehearsals, music hire etc.
The Committee’s current assessment of this additional risk is £7,000.

Therefore the minimum level of reserves required to cover (a) and (b) is £22,000.

When it is possible to accumulate greater reserves this will provide funds for concerts demanding large resources.

Current reserves

The Reserves on 30th June 2023 were £24,526 – which is above the policy target. The Committee will continue to carefully plan future seasons to maintain the target amount as far as possible.

Legal and Administrative Information

Name of Charity	Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society
Legal Status	Unincorporated Trust
Governing Document	Constitution – revised September 2022
Charity Registration Number	800481
Registered address	Lambrook House, 8 Lambrook Street, Glastonbury, BA6 8BX

Trustees

Committee members, who are the Trustees of the charity, are collectively responsible for the management of the Society.

Committee members are elected annually from the membership of the Society – any vacancies occurring during the year being filled by co-option by the Committee, who may also reallocate roles between Committee members.

Members of the Committee (Trustees) and their roles during the year were as follows:

Trustee	Role
Marion Robinson	Chair (<i>retired on 21/6/23</i>)
Peter Lawrence	Acting Chair (<i>coopted on 21/6/23</i>)
Chris Lambert-Shiels	Secretary, Acting Treasurer, Web site
Dennis Johnson	Membership
Chris Jenkins	Subscriptions
Della Menday	Publicity & Programmes (<i>retired on 21/6/23</i>)
Robin Walker	Concert Management
Sue Curragh	Friends, Voice Tuition

Other Volunteers

The Committee is also very grateful for the assistance of other specialist volunteers as follows:

Volunteer	Role
Louise Burton	Publicity Assistant
Nigel Lloyd	Financial Reporting, Gift Aid
Sue Hanson	Librarian
Dot Hunter	Assistant Treasurer
Janet Johnson	Membership Assistant
Mary Newman	Membership Assistant

Bank

Lloyds Bank plc, 24/26 High Street Wells BA5 2SJ
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Report of the Independent Examiner to the Trustees of Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society

I report on the accounts of Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society for the year ended 30 June 2023

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of accounts. The Trustees consider that an audit is not required for 2022-23 under section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act") and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Act
- follow procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

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 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 below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In the course of my examination no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

1. to keep records in accordance with section 130 of the Act;

and

2. to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with accounting requirements of the Act,

have not been met; or to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Samuel Forsey
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