



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

		Period start date			Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year
From	1st	Sept	2016	To	31st	August	2017

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name **ALRESFORD COMMUNITY CHOIR**

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any) **1148708**

Charity's principal address **St John the Baptist Church**

West Street

New Alresford

Postcode SO24 9AG

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Susan Hoare	Chair		
2				
3	Anthony Stanton	Treasurer	Full year, but officially appointed on 6 th March 2017	The choir at AGM
4	Keith Nightingale			
5	Sue Lees			
6	Jennifer Wright			
7	Catherine Carberry		Resigned 13 June 2017	
8	Kim Mason	Co-opted		
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address
Bank	NatWest	105 High Street, Winchester, SO23 9AW
Independent Examiner	Mary Wallbank	18 Park Road, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 2EU

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

--

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution adopted 27 th February 2012
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Association consisting of approximately 150 members
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Trustees are appointed or reappointed annually at the Annual General Meeting held in January/February

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

Subject as noted below, all trustees give their time in acting as a trustee on a voluntary basis, and received no remuneration or other benefits for acting as a trustee.

Following our attempts to rewrite the Constitution for the choir in 2016 our director of Music, Keith Clarke, our Accompanist, Kate Smith, and our Administrator, Judith Smith, resigned as Committee Members. However, all continue to perform their duties as Director of Music, Accompanist and Administrator respectively as before and attend Committee meetings at the request of the committee. An evaluation of their appointment and scale of fees are reassessed on an annual basis by the committee without them being present.

Note: - Our Treasurer has tried to work with the Charities Commission to change our Constitution to that which the members voted acceptance of last year. So far we have not achieved this due to difficulties in communication. As a result we continue to work with our first constitution.



Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

The bringing together of people from our community of all ages and backgrounds to promote, advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects by any means, including through the development of singing and music skills and the presentation of public concerts and recitals. In addition, to further such charitable purposes as the trustees shall think fit but in particular through the making of grants and donations.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

In planning our activities for the year, we kept in mind at both our trustee meetings and in the general manner of running the Choir's activities the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

The focus of our activities has been the bringing together of people from our locality to learn how to make music together, specifically by singing in a community choir. We have welcomed, and will continue to welcome, people of all ages, backgrounds and experience, with the specific aim that those who have never sung before, or who believe that they can't sing, are valued as experienced singers, and that all members can collectively achieve a high standard of musical performance. Through the musical guidance of the Musical Director and additional support of the Accompanist, singing, general musical techniques and skills are learned and practised in weekly rehearsals, thereby achieving the educational aims for the members of the charity.

The members then perform the repertoire that has been worked on, in concerts presented to the public. This public in turn benefit by their appreciation of the presentation of a wide range of music performed to increasingly higher standards. Together with the educational benefits to the members, this therefore satisfies the public benefit requirements for the charity.

Although members pay a monthly subscription to cover the costs of the choir's activities, we do not deny access to members who due to financial hardship are unable to afford to pay a subscription. Similarly, we try to ensure a wide access for our concert audiences by offering concessionary rates for example to young people and pensioners.

We have built up the financial reserves of the Choir with a view to continuing in future years to make donations to other local music and drama groups that have supported the Choir through performing with us.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

A great contribution is made by volunteer members of the Choir, be it to support one another, welcome new members, help prepare the church for rehearsals and concerts by moving chairs, helping to print and distribute music, etc. Without the willingness to help, and the valuable contribution of time, energy, expertise and enthusiasm, we would not have been able to achieve so much. In particular in the current year, the more experienced singers in the Choir have taken more responsibility in supporting and nurturing newer members and especially those with less singing experience and music sight-reading. In this way aspects of the charitable objectives are achieved in a more sustainable and effective manner.

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

The charity has continued to build on previous success with the challenge of more complex works. Since the Choir's formation in February 2012 the Choir has continued to build a repertoire of songs and longer pieces of many types, covering popular and other secular music, and sacred. Of the original membership who formed to work on the original Winchester Cathedral Zimbe! project in the first year of the Choir, the majority continued in the Choir in order to both develop the repertoire and skill of choral singing, but also and mainly for the sheer enjoyment of group singing. This sense of wanting to belong to a body of people that is growing in many different ways is in itself a success. Overall numbers of members has remained fairly steady at around 130, comprising a core of around 80 to 90 who attend nearly all rehearsals and concerts without fail; of these around 50 were original members of the Choir in February 2012. The ability to continue to attract and retain new members, albeit experiencing some degree of churn, is seen as a success, as it demonstrates that we are continuing to offer the Alresford community an avenue for quality music-making that was not available before 2012.

There is no doubt, from the comments received from concert audiences, from our Musical Director and from members themselves that the quality of singing of the Choir continues to improve. In particular the timbre of the collective voices of the Choir has matured. The sight reading of the members has improved considerably along with better pronunciation and diction for the benefit of our audience's. There is also better understanding of the need to follow the Director's arm-waving and a better confidence to do so, which allows better expression of the music and this also enhances the quality of music-making considerably.

It was noted in last year's report that we were fortunate to receive a grant from the Big Lottery Fund for £10,000 to cover the cost of bespoke staging to be used for concerts held in St John's church. We used this staging for two of our concerts last year enhancing the acoustic properties of the performance and enabling a number of members to take part more easily.

The Choir held three main concert events during the year, setting a pattern of events that it is intended the Choir will continue every year. The third annual 'A Carol for Everyone' concert at Christmas was a sell-out success, so much so that the church authorities were subsequently required to rethink the number of people the building can safely contain for concerts; this has implications for the Choir in terms of the financial viability of running concerts in the church; these are not seen to be insurmountable, but have required very careful and precise planning of events.

There can be no doubt that the highlight of the year was the concert held in April when the Choir performed Handel's Messiah accompanied by the Hanover Band, a most demanding programme that stretched the members of the Choir very much outside their zone of experience. This we performed at St. Swithun's School for the benefit of the Murray Parish Trust who are raising funds for a new children's ward at Southampton Hospital. When the total funds raised by this activity are taken into account, the MPT benefitted by approximately £12,000. The trustees believe the high cost of employing an orchestra for this event is most definitely a worthwhile use of the Choir's financial resources, particularly if such expenditure is correctly planned for and reserves budgeted to be built up from other concert-running activities to allow the holding of similar types of performance in the future. We also performed the Alexander L'Estrange "Song Cycle" together with the "Call Me Al" Quintet.

The trustees consider the greatest achievement of the Choir remains the perhaps more intangible aspect of bringing together a body of people who each derive a positive sense of support and fellowship from one another and who have significantly brought the Community together.

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

We hold surplus funds at the bank amounting to a little over £17,000 at the end of the year. The charity is developing a formal policy on reserves and considers it appropriate to have a reserve of £5,000 to meet cash-flow needs. In addition, we attempt to reserve funds to engage the services of a semi-professional orchestra or band to work with the choir in the same way as was done past concerts. The charity aims to secure concert income from selling sufficient tickets priced appropriately, or from sponsorship of events or advertising space in programmes, to ensure that such level of reserves can be maintained.

We were awarded a Grant of £10,000 from the Big Lottery Fund that has enabled us to purchase our own staging. To ensure appropriate control of these funds they were allocated to a "Restricted Funds Account". This staging is now in use.

Details of any funds materially in deficit

Not applicable.

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

The Charity has two main sources of funds. Firstly from member's subscriptions, £16,722 together with Gift Aid recovered in the sum of £2,697 and from ticket sales for the three concerts staged at Christmas, Spring and Summer, which amounted to £16,344 compared to 2016 at £6,659. The amounts received from members' subscriptions were used to support the key objectives of hiring our funding rehearsal venue, and paying costs of the Musical Director, Accompanist and Administrator and other general overheads of running the choir, and so allow for the choir's musical and educational objectives to be achieved. The proceeds from ticket sales were used to cover the costs of staging the concerts.

The resources used to present the concerts enabled the charity to make a donation £1,500 to the Murray Parish Trust (mentioned earlier) and provide its public benefit in bringing the Choir's music-making to an audience who are thus enriched by the experience.

Section F Other optional information

Section G Declaration

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)		
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)		
Date		