

ST. EDMUND'S
CHOIR

**Love to
sing?**
Our future

Compiled by

Charlie Corkin

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

More than just a church choir...

With a repertoire including Abba and Zadok, we pride ourselves on being a choir for everyone!

Formed in 1997 by four people, the Choir now has more than fifty members and performs a variety of concerts and events throughout the year.

Our aims:

- To be a free, inclusive group for all with no auditions, experience or ability necessary of any member
- To provide a programme of events featuring a variety of genres, styles and formats attracting new and returning participants
- To develop the skills of people within the community by using music as an educational resource
- To continue to provide the musical provision at St. Edmund of Canterbury Church
- To fundraise for local, national and international causes
- To ensure the Choir as an organisation is more confident, ambitious and effective

AIM ONE

To be a free, inclusive organisation for all with no auditions, experience or ability necessary of any member

Current position

The Choir has been lucky to maintain a consistent core membership of around 30 people for the past six/seven years. Over that time, it has peaked at 55 members and on occasion the numbers have dropped below 20 for concerts, events and large services. Most importantly, the Choir continues to be an audition free Choir, something that has attracted people who have never been part of a Choir before. However, stronger singers are also part of the Choir and the quality of the events produced is consistently high.

Since January 2018, there has been a significant increase in new members. From the summer of 2018 to the anticipated number for the Christmas concert, the numbers increased from 26 to 54. Although it is important to note that spring and summer events have a generally lower number than that of Christmas events, in Christmas 2017 there were 35 singers for the concert.

The age of the Choir ranges from 16 to 82 with an average age of 52. 94% of the Choir are White British with only 6% representing BME. Out of the 54 people due to sing at the Christmas concert, 12 are male (22%).

As part of a recruitment drive, there was a significant focus on using social media to attract larger crowds of people to come along. This was successful in attracting 22 people to rehearsals and 14 remaining as members of the Choir.

Issues and challenges

Like with many Choirs, there are a higher number of higher voices than lower voices, particularly male tenors and basses. This has led to certain members having to 'battle' against other sections in order to create a suitable balance for the repertoire singing.

The use of social media has attracted a younger group of people to the Choir, however 70% of the Choir are over the age of 40, with only seven members under the age of 30. There is one member under the age of 18.

Whilst rehearsal attendance is good, in more cases than not there are more than 12 members missing each week. Sometimes this means that rehearsal time can be taken to mop-up missed weeks causing a rush as concerts and events draw nearer.

Future direction

In order to increase the numbers within the Choir, there will be a number of alternative events to attract new members.

Rather than completing all rehearsals in St. Edmund's, we will move the rehearsal to alternative venues every so often to attract other people from the Waterloo and Crosby area. Additional sectional rehearsals will also support the consistent quality of events whilst adding flexibility for those who have to miss rehearsals.

Section representatives will take an active role in following up with members to ensure that they are welcomed, feel comfortable and supported.

In addition to this, there will be particular events for men to get involved in with particular 'men-only' rehearsals.

The relationship with St. Edmund and St. Thomas of Canterbury School will continue to grow and inclusion of their choir at concerts and events will increase. Following this, a children's/youth division of the Choir will be formed when more young people are involved with the hope of an additional programme for them during the course of the year.

Objectives

	Objective	Measurements	Responsible	Deadline
1	Increase number of members in the Choir, with a particular focus on young people and men	There will be a total of 70 members in the community Choir	CC/KD	March 2020
		There will be 22 members of the Choir under the age of 30	CC/KD/JW	March 2020
		The tenor and bass section combined will featured 25 men	CC/KD	March 2023
2	To decrease the average age of the Choir to below 40		CC/KD	March 2023
3	To develop rehearsal time to ensure more focus is given to sections	Additional optional sectional rehearsals throughout the rehearsal process	CC/KD	On-going
4	Use 'travelling' and open rehearsals to increase awareness and membership	At least one 'open' rehearsal per concert/event	CC/KD	On-going
		At least one rehearsal every six months in an alternative venue	CC/KD/IM	On-going
		At least one rehearsal per year with a 'male' focus	CC/KD	On-going
5	To develop a choir for young people	There will be 30 members of the young people's Choir	CC/KD	March 2023

AIM TWO

To provide a programme of events featuring a variety of genres, styles and formats attracting new and returning participants

Current position

The Choir has been successful in producing a range of concerts in varying styles, genres and themes in addition to its annual Christmas concert. Since 2013, all of the Choir's concerts have sold out regardless of the size of the venue – from the intimate and small concerts held in the School hall to the 1,200 sell-out concert in collaboration with Wirral Community Choir.

After a period of a couple of years without a 'themed' mid-year concert, the Choir hit the ground running in 2018 producing three concerts.

Issues and challenges

Mid-year concerts have always been a struggle to maintain numbers of both the audience members and choir members. In 2017, the planned summer concert had to be abandoned due to poor choir attendance and poor audience numbers.

Although the audiences that we have are supportive, they are from the same families and areas returning. There is no evidence to suggest a new wave of audience members, which does not reflect the online following the Choir now has.

Future direction

Concerts will continue to be at the forefront of the programme of events throughout the year, however additional events including working with local bands, orchestras, St. Edmund and St. Thomas' school and local businesses will also add to the work that we do.

Universities will be approached to add to the accompaniment of the concerts and events to add variety and depth the music produced, in addition to the accompaniment provided by our usual accompanist.

New directions of instrumentation will create diversity and reach new audiences through their existing contacts, friends and audiences. It also gives the Choir the opportunity to sing with a different accompaniment.

Working alongside the school choir will increase the number of young people we are engaging with. This will be a prime opportunity to develop the young people's choir.

Using alternative rehearsal spaces will encourage those who haven't experience singing with Choir will encourage them to take part. See Outreach Development Plan for more information

Objectives

	Objective	Measurements	Responsible	Deadline
1	To continue a programme of events each year	There will be at least three 'concerts' per year	CC/KD	On-going
		There will be three additional events per year	CC/KD	On-going
2	Develop relationships with local businesses, music groups,	Produce at least one event per year in collaboration with	CC/KD/IM/TB	On-going

	bands etc	another organisation		
		School choir to be invited to join us for two events per year	CC/JW	On-going
3	Events taking place in new venues and areas that we have not yet covered	At least one event per year in an alternative venue or new area	CC/IM	On-going

AIM THREE

To develop the skills of people within the community by using music as an educational resource

Current position

As a proud group made up of ordinary people, the quality of the music produced is exceptional. It has been praised by Directors of Music of both Liverpool Cathedrals, renowned artists and reviewed as being 'one of the best nights out'.

To ensure the Choir members' skills are challenged, they are given as much opportunity to rehearse away from the Choir using rehearsal tracks and tuition. Sectional rehearsals also add to the development of the music in the run up to the concert series. In addition to this, basic music theory is periodically reviewed for ease of following music and understanding a score.

Skill development is minimal and focus music 'booster' classes aren't often popular amongst the group.

CPD opportunities have been given to members of the Working Group to help support them as they support the work of the Choir.

Issues and challenges

Often time taken to go over music theory removes time away from the rehearsal. This can lead to a rush during rehearsal time to get pieces polished and everything completed.

Many of the Choir members have been with the Choir for several years and with the only minimal work done on developing theory and vocal quality, mainly due to time and resource constraints.

Though a Choir exists at the school, there is no connection between the work of the Choir and the work of the school choir. Both groups produce their own concerts each year.

Future direction

Over the course of a year, each Choir member should have the opportunity to have a group (two or three at a time) singing lesson to help with technique and for general refreshers of choral singing. This will be done by professionally trained musician and will help to standardise technique between members of the group.

Additional sectional rehearsals during a concert rehearsal season will add to the quality of the music and increase the confidence within sections for their harmonies. These will be led by the section leaders and supported by the Director and Assistant Director of Music.

The Choir Support Team will be offered appropriate CPD if they wish to take it, provided it falls within budget.

Objectives

	Objective	Measurements	Responsible	Deadline
1	To continue to develop the skills of the current Choir	At least one 'vocal' lesson per Choir member per year	CC/KD	On-going
		At least one group theory lesson per rehearsal series	CC/KD	On-going
		Additional sectional rehearsals each concert season	CC/KD/Section Leads	On-going

2	Support young people with music exams, tuition, performances	At least one one-to-one session with any young person taking an exam/performance in music	CC/KD	Ad-hoc
3	Provide opportunity for University students to perform at events	Creation of a 'band' for particular concerts made up of university students	CC/KD	One concert per year
4	CST to have opportunities of CPD when required		CC/SL	Ad-hoc

AIM FOUR

To continue to provide the musical provision at St. Edmund of Canterbury Church

Current position

The Director of Music oversees the music provision of the Church in addition to the work of the community choir and developing relationships with other organisations and groups.

There are two organists that support with the function of the music at Mass on a Sunday and one on a Saturday evening that supports the Laudate group.

There are only a small handful of regular people singing on a Sunday, but numbers vary between 3 and 15 singers each week. The addition of a folk mass once per month has added to the popularity of the singing at Mass.

During Christmas and Holy Week, there is an increase in attendance to support with the music and this is well received by the congregations.

The number of weddings at St. Edmund's has decreased with only 3 in 2018.

Issues and challenges

Work needs to be done to encourage the current Choir members to support on a more regular basis with the Sunday Mass. In addition to this, work needs to be done to improve the relationship with younger people to get involved with Parish music.

Since the departure of the previous Director of Music, leading the singing has become more difficult.

The Organ is in need of work doing to it as it is 60+ years old and no major repairs have been done to it.

There is little work done in collaboration with the Laudate group and there is an us/them mentality between the two groups. From an outsider's perspective, this is damaging to the reputation of the Choir, the Laudate Group and the Parish.

Work also needs to be done to improve the relationship and communication between the Laudate group and the Choir to allow for cohesion with the music offered at services, both regular and on occasions.

Future direction

A standardised rota for Sunday mornings will be introduced and other members of the Choir will be trained to lead in the singing to allow increased quality of music from the group on a Sunday and at larger services. For more information, see the Service Provision Plan.

The contract for 'other services' details that 10 people must attend or no money is asked of the hirer. The same approach is to be taken with all services to encourage a regular and well-balanced throughout the year. A service level agreement will be devised and reviewed every 12 months.

The new organ will be installed in 2019 which will allow for better accompaniment at services and the folk mass will continue to take place once per month.

The Laudate Group will be invited to join in rehearsals ahead of special services

As the work increases with the school, the School Choir and classes will lead monthly Masses from the school. Regular liaison with the Laudate group to streamline larger services and events will be undertaken for a regular and consistent quality to services.

The Assistant Director of Music will lead on liaising with other parishes about musical support at weddings and services.

Objectives

	Objective	Measurements	Responsible	Deadline
1	To develop a fair SLA with the Parish for music provision	At least 10 choir members each Sunday at services	CC/ALL	Reviewed every 12 months
		At least 15 Choir members at services over Holy Week and Christmas time	CC/ALL	Reviewed every 12 months
2	Standardised music provision at all services	Develop relationship with Laudate Group to ensure consistency within the parish. At least two services per year rehearsed for and sung together.	CC	March 2020
3	Ensure variation of styles of music at services	At least four masses led by the School	CC/KD	On-going
		A folk mass once per month	CC	On-going
4	Increase number of weddings per year	At least three weddings per year with an increase of one each year	KD	3 – 2019 4 – 2020 5 – 2021 6 – 2022

AIM FIVE

To fundraise for local, national and international causes

Current position

Fundraising has consistently been done on a concert-by-concert basis in order to support charities selected by the Choir and to support the Parish.

Most income comes through ticket sales from events, followed by donations and fees for services.

Over the years, the Choir has fundraised £40,000 for charitable causes.

Issues and challenges

In 2017, when we had to cancel a concert we suffered a loss of around £700.

There has never been a specific plan to fundraise for ourselves and decisions on what we should retain are left until post-events when all income streams are worked out.

Future direction

Through set-up of an overall yearly financial forecast and budget to project what donations we are able to give. See Finance section.

Rather than deciding the charity each concert, there will be one or a selection of charities chosen at the beginning of each year by Choir and we will support them throughout the course of the year. A donation will also be made to the Parish for their support.

Fundamentally, we need to ensure longevity of our own work. We will establish ourselves as a charity and endeavour to focus on ourselves as a charitable cause first and foremost.

We will work with local businesses and sponsors to develop a clear sponsorship package that assists us financially and an attractive offer for them.

Objectives

	Objective	Measurements	Responsible	Deadline
1	Charitable sources decided for the year	At least one charity chosen to support in addition to the work of the Choir and supporting the church.	ALL	Reviewed every 12 months
2	To continue to grow relationships with local businesses	Sponsorship matches the target set-out in the financial forecast	CC/TB/ALL	March 2020
		At least two private events	CC/TB	March 2020

AIM SIX

To ensure the Choir as an organisation is more confident, ambitious and effective

Current position

In 2014 when the Choir went through a phase of rapid expansion, the former Director formed a Working Group to assist with the production of a particularly large concert. Today, the Working Group comprises of 10 members of the Choir to oversee the running of the group, all with particular responsibilities. The group meets every three weeks in the run up to the Concert with a larger 'planning meeting' six months before each major event. Working Group meetings take place directly before a rehearsal and anyone is welcome to come along and contribute to the meetings.

Every two-three months, the Working Group provide the opportunity to receive feedback from Choir members to ensure that Choir members have a direct input into the plans for the future. Whilst the majority of the feedback received is very promising, the constructive feedback is discussed at Working Group meetings and actioned if necessary.

The Director is ensuring that skills of the Working Group are being developed with experience of financial management being offered to the Treasurer (a trainee accountant) and digital marketing skills courses being given to the Marketing Officer.

Recently, we have invested into equipment for concerts, events and services to ensure a high quality of performance for all styles and occasions. This has included a new digital piano, speaker and AV system and stage lighting.

The overall brand of the Choir has recently been revised with a consistent house-style and format for all external marketing and promotion. Through this, we have gained an addition 84 likes on Facebook and Choir members, their family and friends and our audiences are sharing posts. Since January, more than 10,000 people have seen our work on social media across 37 different countries.

Issues and challenges

Whilst there has been an incredibly successful history of concerts and events over the years, the forward planning of events has been limited. Due to commitments of organisers, concerts and events have been rushed both in terms of rehearsals and planning.

At times, this has led to a lack of momentum from Choir members and the audience. Between 2015 and 2017, numbers in the Choir almost halved. During this time, there were no spring or summer events outside of services.

Choir members do not feel like the Working Group is something they can or should be a part of.

It has been noted by several members that we often 'hide' behind St. Edmund's as an easy option and we need to challenge ourselves further for sustainability rather than be seen as a Church Choir.

Future direction

The Working Group was set-up to support the organisation of a concert, as opposed to the running of the Choir. Today, they oversee the running of the Choir, rather than focussing on a particular project.

From January 2019, those with particular roles will be part of the Choir Support Team and the term *Working Group* will no longer be used.

Through CPD and more emphasis on roles of the Choir Support Team, the Choir will become more self-sufficient. This will allow for concerts to be scheduled around the availability of the Choir rather than those leading it. CPD will continue to be offered to members of the Choir Support Team.

We will continue to expand on our current brand both with a regular and consistent online presence and develop relationships with local media and press to continue to share our news, stories and work.

Through Making Music, an independent umbrella of amateur music groups, we will receive support in setting up the group as a registered charity.

Objectives

	Objective	Measurements	Responsible	Deadline
1	Become a registered Charity	Recruitment of four trustees and agreed interim Governance structure	CC	April 2019
		Safeguarding policy produced	CC/IM	April 2019
2	Reorganisation of the Choir Support Team	All roles revised to match the need of the group	CC	Reviewed every 12 months
2	Become a member of Making Music		CC/SL	April 2019
3	Maintaining a presence and developing our profile	At least five press stories per year	CC	On-going
		At least four successful 'social media' campaigns per year	CC	On-going

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Current position

The Choir is a well-resourced organisation with a steady income that reflects the work that it does. The success of the concerts and events produced provide a strong sales income and support from local businesses is developing with an average of £1k of sponsorship per concert.

The Director and Treasurer have worked hard to ensure that expenditure is low and additional donations are given after a suitable remittance to funding the work of the Choir has been agreed.

Issues and challenges

The Choir's bank account was in the name of former Working Group members and this took some time to change over to reflect the current Choir Support Team. This has led to a delayed analysis of income/expenditure.

There has never been a projected budget per year/event and this has led to overspend in places. The Treasurer is aware that budgets need to be built into planning ahead.

Future direction

We are committed to making our financials as efficient as possible. The Treasurer oversees the day-to-day management of the finances from payment to budget, subject to approval by the Choir Support Team.

Following the confirmation of Charity status, the Trustees of the Charity will be responsible for financial liability and through Making Music a suitable insurance package will work alongside the budget to ensure all finances are free from risk.

Being a registered Charity will allow us to apply for grants from Trusts and Foundations, Lottery funding pots and more attractive for support from businesses.

Currently, we are given rehearsal space in-kind from the Parish. In order to ensure fairness and the Parish does not miss out, there is a dedicated line in the budget for the Parish as a donation for their support. 'Charity' donations are not set to a particular charity so money to the Parish may increase if the Choir chooses to support them for a particular concert or period.

A reserves policy will be devised to ensure there is enough money to sustain the organisation for a period of six months without additional income. Although this will take a couple of years to build up, ultimately it will ensure the smooth running of the organisation whilst other income streams can be explored.

Objectives

	Objective	Measures	Person responsible	Date
1	A sustainable budget that reflects the work of the group	Reviewed each year by Treasurer and approved by Trustees	SL/CST	Each January for following financial year
		Reserves policy to be devised	SL/TB	March 2020
2	To secure funding through grants made by Trusts and Foundations	There is a target in the budget to meet each year for funding	CC/TB	Every 12 months

Organisation Development Plan

Context

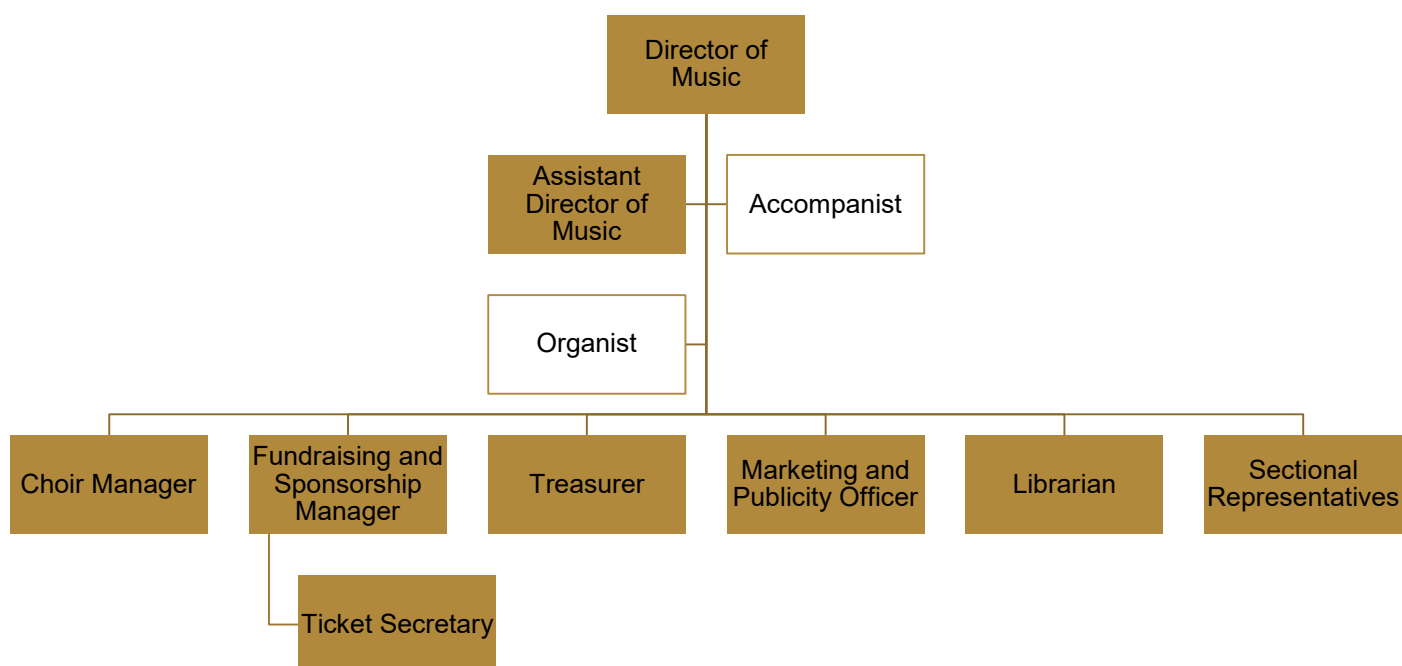
When the Choir was formed in 1997, the musical director was responsible for all aspects of the running of the Choir. At this time, there were a small number of musicians involved and concerts were produced on an ad-hoc basis. Income to the Choir was small and all donations went to charities.

In subsequent years, the Choir grew and with this there was an increased number of events. Money coming into the Choir grew as its reputation did. The Director was assisted by a number of Assistant Directors over the years to support him in the musical direction of the concerts.

When the Choir raised £10,000 for Jospice between two concerts, the Director recruited members of the Choir to form a working group.

In September 2017, Charlie Corkin was appointed Director of Music and began to look at alternative ways the group could be governed. In December 2018, it was renamed the Choir Support Team to closer align it to the work that it does.

Current Choir Support Team structure



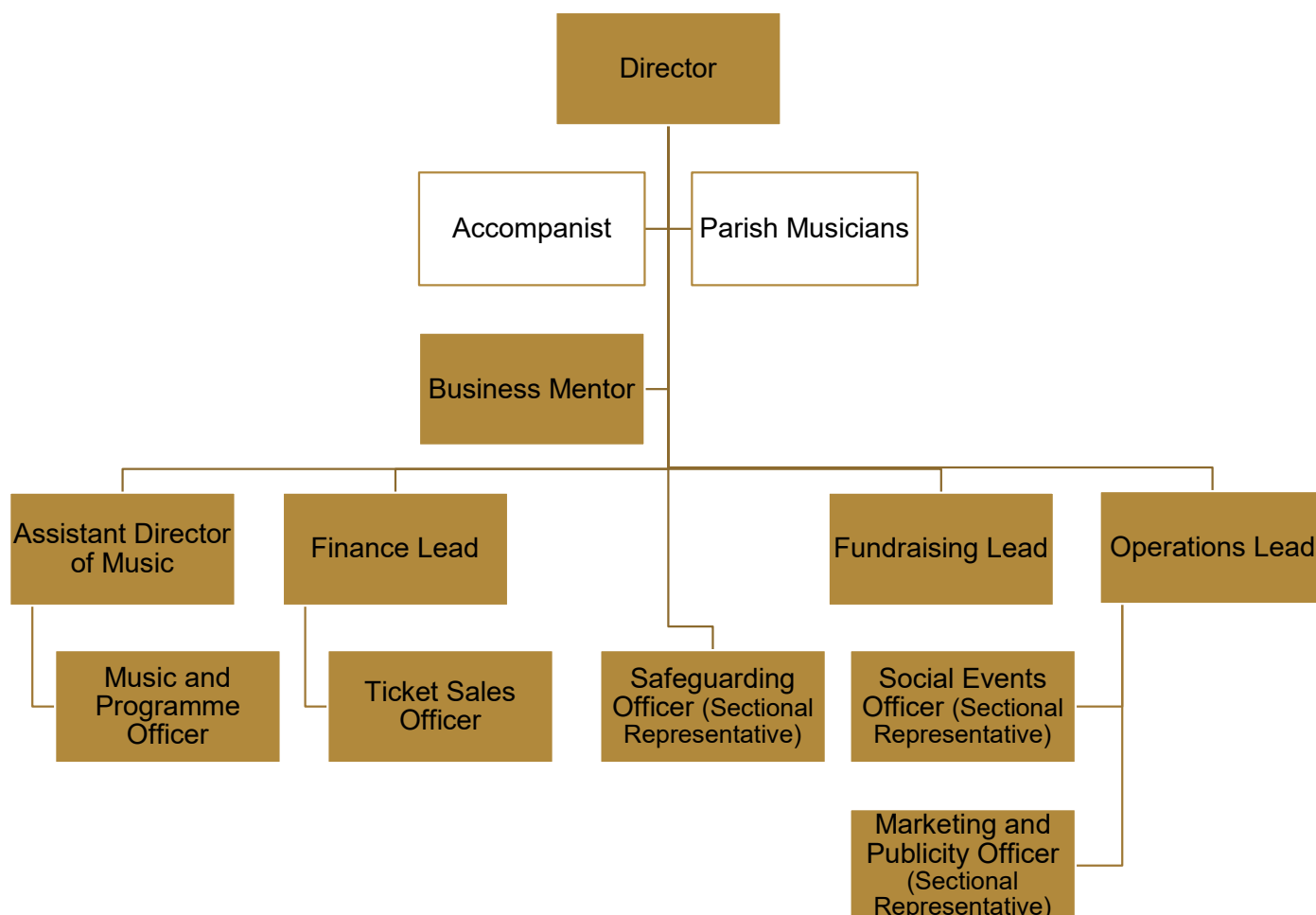
Proposed Choir Support Team structure

The new structure will see certain roles aligned to allow for more efficient processing of decisions and pass ownership and responsibility of the group down, rather than seeking the approval of the Director. It is also proposed that the Director and four 'Leaders' will become Trustees of the Choir as a Charity. The 'Leaders' will have responsibility for particular areas.

We will also seek external support from a Business Mentor to support the growth and governance of the group.

The aim of the proposed structure is to ensure that there is more self-sufficiency within the Choir. The new structure would allow for natural delegation; however, the Director will continue to oversee the work of the Choir regardless of availability for events.

In order to ensure that the Choir Support Team are comfortable with their roles, the Director will meet with them individually once every 12 months.



Charlie Corkin
Katherine Daly
Tony Bradshaw
Sarah Lee
Imelda Morrison

Director
Assistant Director of Music
Fundraising Lead
Finance Lead
Operations Lead

Toby Corkin
Sylvia Doyle
Helen Lee
Sarah Pilkington
Jacquelyn Williams

Marketing and Publicity Officer/Tenor Section Representative
Ticket Sales Officer
Safeguarding Officer/Alto Section Representative
Social Events Officer/Soprano Section Representative
Music and Programme Officer

Love to sing? Outreach Development Plan

In class

Below is the proposed in-class Love to sing? programme. The sessions would be run by the Music and Programmes Officer and the Director of Music will assist in the oversight of the programme.

	Half Term 1	Half Term 2
Autumn Term	Year 5 (Class 1)	Year 5 (Class 2)
Spring Term	Year 4 (Class 1)	Year 4 (Class 2)
Summer Term	Year 3 (Class 1)	Year 3 (Class 2)

Week 1	Singing together A basic introduction to singing together with examples of how music is used to develop teamwork activities, listening and performance skills.
Week 2	Singing at Church An insight into Choral music at Church and how the tradition has changed. Learning two examples of music for performance.
Week 3	Preparing for performance. Final preparation for the Mass on Sunday. All pieces rehearsed ahead of the performance. 'Class' Mass at St. Edmund's Church
Week 4	Other genres of singing... The group would be taken through some additional music, chosen based on the ability of the group and rehearsed ahead of a future performance,
Week 5	Preparing for performance Final preparation for next week's concert. All pieces rehearsed.
Week 6	Performance Features a mixture of the work done for the Mass and also from other genres.

Choir

The Director of Music will work with the School Choir with an aim to include them in concerts, events and services that the Community Choir is part of. This will include concerts throughout the year, events and services at St. Edmund of Canterbury Church.

The School Choir would support the classes during week three of their programme.

There is possibility that the School Choir could be run by St. Edmund's Choir.

Service Provision Plan

	5:15pm Saturday Evening Mass	10am Sunday Mass
First Sunday of the Month	Laudate Choir and John Morrison-Wells	Folk Mass Led by Director of Music and supported by visiting musicians. <i>Term time only</i>
Second Sunday of the Month	Laudate Choir and John Morrison-Wells	Choir-led service Led by Music and Programme Officer, organ played by Assistant Organist
Third Sunday of the Month	Laudate Choir and John Morrison-Wells	Choir-led service Led by Music and Programme Officer, organ played by Director of Music
Fourth Sunday of the Month	Laudate Choir and John Morrison-Wells	Choir-led service Led by Director of Music, organ played by Assistant Organist
Fifth Sunday of the Month	Laudate Choir and John Morrison-Wells	Choir-led service Led by Director of Music, organ played by Assistant Organist

**The School-led service will replace the regular Sunday morning service. If it falls on the first Sunday of the month, the Folk Mass will move to the second Sunday of the month.*

	Singers	Musicians
Maundy Thursday	St. Edmund's Choir, Laudate Group	Director of Music, Assistant Director of Music
Good Friday	St. Edmund's Choir, Laudate Group	
Easter Vigil	Chamber group of volunteers	Director of Music, Assistant Director of Music
Easter Sunday	St. Edmund's Choir, School Choir	Director of Music, Folk group
Christmas Eve (5:15pm)	Laudate Choir, School Choir	Director of Music, Assistant Organist
Midnight Mass	St. Edmund's Choir, Laudate Group	Director of Music
Christmas Day (10am)	St. Edmund's Choir, School Choir	Folk group

Rehearsals for each of the seasons will take place the two Tuesdays prior to Easter Sunday and Christmas Eve. The Laudate Group, St. Edmund's Choir and the School Choir will all be invited to take part in these rehearsals.