



Supporting tomorrow's vocal stars



Annual Report and Financial Statements
for the 12 months ended
31 December 2025

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COMPANY INFORMATION
FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

President	Sir Simon Keenlyside
Trustees	Joy Atkinson Andrew Foot (treasurer) Michael Hart (chair of trustees) Jeffrey Sutherland-Kay
Company Secretary	Jeffrey Sutherland-Kay (appointed 01 January 2025)
Management Committee	Joy Atkinson Lynton Atkinson Andrew Foot Michael Hart (chair) Kaarina Manzur Jeffrey Sutherland-Kay Juliet Telford Jean Woodall
Company Address	113 Middlehill Road Colehill Wimborne Dorset BH21 2HL www.hurncourtopera.org
Company Number	CE013575 Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Charity Number	1177609
Independent Examiner	David Ordman B.Eng MBA FCA

TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

We present our report and financial statements for the 12 months ended 31 December 2025. We have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102 effective 1st January 2019), Charities SORP (FRS102).

1. COMPANY STATUS and MANAGEMENT

Hurn Court Opera (HCO) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and a charity registered in England with the Charity Commission.

Our governing document is our Constitution, as updated during 2025 and approved and adopted at the 2026 Annual General Meeting. In the event of HCO being wound up, the trustee/members have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.

As existing trustees, we elect new trustees in accordance with the Constitution. On appointment, all new trustees receive a copy of the Constitution and induction information, which includes the latest Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements and the Charity Commission booklet 'Essential Trustee'. Training is made available to all trustees as required. As trustees we meet with the non-trustee members of the management committee on a regular basis to set strategy and business plans and to monitor performance.

The Management Committee is HCO's de facto governing body with terms of reference defined by the trustees. The trustees and other volunteer members of the Management Committee bring a wide range of skills to the charity, including:

- Director-level business management
- Opera production
- Artistic direction
- Vocal coaching
- Governance and policy
- Strategic and business planning
- Financial management
- Fundraising
- Marketing and PR
- Risk planning and management
- Project planning and management

In addition, approximately £60,000 is provided in kind by volunteers towards the cost of producing and presenting our annual opera.

HCO has no employees. A part-time freelance marketing communications professional is contracted, however, to create and manage our marketing communications and social media activities, as these are key to promoting our events.

2. OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

HCO's mission is to support the vocal stars of tomorrow, which mission the company pursues through its Object.

HCO's Object is to advance, improve, develop and maintain public appreciation of the art and science of music in any way that the trustees see fit, including through public concerts, operatic performances, recitals, masterclasses and competitions.

The focus for this Object is two-fold:

- To provide performance opportunities for young singers who are about to embark on, or who have recently embarked on, their professional careers.
- To perform in areas/towns that have limited or no exposure to professional opera performance, offering tickets at affordable prices.

3. TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Charity law require us as trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the company for that period. In preparing those financial statements we are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare financial statements on a going-concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to assume that the company will continue to operate.

As trustees we are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and also for ensuring that the financial statements comply with relevant legislation. We are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and thus for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

4. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND RESERVES

Income in 2025 totalled £86,650.16, compared with £89,865.43 in 2024. HCO's principal sources of funding in 2025 were:

- Ticket income
- Patrons and Friends subscriptions
- Donations and sponsorships from private individuals
- HMRC Gift Aid

Our Patrons and Friends are central to our financial performance, contributing £21,961 in subscriptions and £20,300 in sponsorships and donations, with the vast majority of these contributions attracting Gift Aid. The number of Patrons and Friends continues to increase each year. Ticketing income was £29,717 and an increase in ticket income will be a particular area of focus in 2026.

Expenditure in 2025 totalled £105,894.71, compared with £81,054.93 in 2024. £12,264 of expenditure in 2025, however, refers to the opera presentation in 2026. This is made up of HCO's contribution to the new collaboration with Arts University Bournemouth on the design and creation of costumes (see page 8) and prepayment of AirBnB accommodation for the singers.

The accounting deficit in 2025, including the 2026 opera payments noted above, was £19,244.55, compared with a surplus of £8,810.50 in 2024. Whilst any deficit is of concern, the trustees believe that fluctuations from year to year are inevitable. In addition, HCO has retained a freelance marketing and PR professional for 2026 to expand our marketing communications and social media presence and develop ticket income.

At 31st December 2025, HCO held funds amounting to £65,849.19, of which £11,250 were funds restricted to the opera production in 2026.

As HCO has no employees and no premises, there are no significant overheads. As a result, no specific fund for Operating Reserves has been set aside.

HCO aims not to enter into any commitments that might leave the charity with a significant deficit in the event of cancellation or disappointing ticket sales. Additionally, HCO will not plan to make a loss on any activity which could not be covered from reserves or fundraising.

This Reserves Policy is enabled by the unpaid work of the trustees and other volunteers. Whilst there is no specific reserve set, the trustees ensure that funds held are sufficient to cover any potential loss. At 31st December 2025, HCO held funds of £30,000 in a fixed term deposit account with Lloyds Bank, which are deemed to include sufficient cover for any potential loss. In addition, HCO carries a modest level of cancellation insurance.

HCO does not make grants to other organisations and does not invest in any social programmes.

5. INVESTMENT POLICY

As there is a relatively low level of funds available for investment, we consider bank deposits to be a satisfactory vehicle for HCO's needs. In the year to 31st December 2025 these have been short term deposits with HCO's banker.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

As a small organisation with no employees and no premises, HCO takes a proportionate and appropriate approach to risk, whilst bearing mind that we carry risk across a wide range of areas. HCO currently addresses risk through assessments for each activity and venue, which are prepared in advance and reviewed on the date of an activity.

Good organisational management, however, requires that all risks are identified, analysed and monitored to ensure that an organisation understands its overall risk exposure and acts accordingly. To address this, HCO is developing a detailed risk taxonomy for adoption during 2026, covering the four pillars of business and strategic risks, funding and P&L risks, operational risks and regulatory risks.

Financial risk continues to be the principal area of focus and drives our caution in financial management.

7. GOVERNANCE

HCO continues to develop and improve its governance, across the three areas of organisational governance, board governance and policy.

- The Articles of Association, the HCO's lead governance document, has been reviewed and revised and will be presented for adoption at the 2026 Annual General Meeting. The Articles include the company's rules on trustees and their appointment
- The principal governing body is the Management Committee with defined terms of reference; it meets six times a year, with formalised agendas, detailed minutes and an active actions log
- With no employees, organisational governance is relatively straightforward. To support the Management Committee, we have improved the storage and accessibility of documents. In addition, improvements to risk management are underway (see above)
- The policy suite has been further expanded and now covers all the necessary areas. Each policy is reviewed in accordance with the review period set in the policy

8. ACHIEVEMENTS AND BENEFITS

Our performance programme for 2025 followed a similar pattern to previous years, with an opera presentation in April, a Masterclass in June, recitals in September and December and HCO's Singer of the Year competition in November.

Opera – La Cenerentola by Rossini

Three fully-staged, professional performances of this Cinderella story were given in April in Winchester (Hampshire), Blandford Forum (Dorset) and Christchurch (Dorset), all areas with limited exposure to professional opera performance.

The opera provided eighteen opportunities for emerging professional singers through seven solo roles, eight chorus roles and three additional cover roles for the female leads. The singers were selected either through the HCO Singer of the Year competitions or by audition, the roles having been advertised on Audition Oracle. The singers were supported by an orchestra of fourteen professional players.

The performances advanced and maintained public appreciation of music, and opera in particular, in the following ways:

- 880 people attended across the three venues, with Winchester Theatre Royal sold out. The venues are located where there is little opportunity for live opera, let alone professionally staged opera. The performances drew in local people, some new to the art form

- Ticket prices were affordable, ranging from £10 to £60, with discounts for under 18s and full-time students, making high quality opera accessible to a wide group of people
- By contracting, and fairly remunerating, singers in the early stages of their careers, the performances provided opportunities for young artists to develop their careers and helped to deliver a pipeline of talent for the future



In a new venture for HCO, we partnered with the BA (Hons) Costume course at Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) for the design and creation of four gowns for the principal female roles. Three of the gowns can be seen in the photograph at the front of this report, whilst the photograph to the left shows Leila Zanette as Angelina (Cinderella) wearing her stunning ballgown.

Following the success of this new venture, we have agreed a further year's partnership with AUB for the design and creation of costumes for both the female and male leads in our 2026 opera *La Traviata*, to include wigs and hairpieces. This is a sustainable partnership, with all the costumes returning to AUB to be added to their hire store, with the rental income going to support AUB coursework.

Summing up our opera presentation, critic David Truslove writing in *Opera Today* said: "Sparkling performances from Hurn Court Opera's *La Cenerentola*... an entertaining evening of astute comedy and accomplished singing".

Our annual opera production presents a substantial financial commitment, with this year's opera costing £69,465 to put on. But our annual production fulfils our core objectives of: presenting opera at reasonable prices in areas which have few opportunities to hear such music; and supporting young talent. In addition, more than 25% of the cost of *La Cenerentola* was covered by sponsorships and donations from our Patrons, Friends and other supporters, including a grant of £6,160 from Idlewild Trust received in December 2024.

John Seldon Masterclass

We were delighted to welcome internationally acclaimed, British soprano Patricia Rozario OBE to Merley House in Wimborne on 8th June to lead the masterclass sponsored by our Patron John Seldon. An audience of 40, made up of regular supporters, people new to Hurn Court Opera and volunteers, heard three young singers give short recitals, who were then coached by Patricia.

Our annual masterclass is very much part of our objective to give young singers an opportunity to perform and, with coaching from such an experienced artist, also assists in their professional development. It is open to the public and free to under 18s and full-time students. In addition, the masterclass brought high-quality performance to an area where such events are unusual, helping to advance public appreciation of vocal music.

Recitals

A pair of recitals featuring Lily Mo Browne and Stephen Whitford, two prizewinners from our 2024 Singer of the Year competition, were held in September, in Winchester and Wimborne. Accompanied by Hamish Brown, rising stars Lily Mo and Stephen captivated enthusiastic audiences with a varied programme of song, including Butterworth's *Shropshire Lad*, songs by Hahn, Fauré and Amy Woodford-Finden, duets by

Mendelssohn and ending with a set of parlour songs. Attending their first Hurn Court Opera recital, a couple at the Winchester performance commented “Just fabulous”.

In December, HCO’s annual Box of Delights Christmas concert in Wimborne was a sell-out. Not only was our objective to provide performance opportunities fulfilled but the audience of Patrons, Friends and other supporters, both old and new, were able to hear and meet Caroline Taylor, who will be singing the lead role of Violetta in HCO’s presentation of Verdi’s ever popular opera La Traviata in April 2026. Through promoting La Traviata at the recital, we generated an additional £3,000 in donations and new Friends’ memberships.

Singer of the Year

HCO has been holding a Singer of the Year competition since 2018. It provides an important platform for young vocal talent, with selected prizewinners performing in future HCO recitals and opera. For the last few years, the competition has been supported by The Grange Festival, the Hampshire-based opera festival that runs annually during June and July, and we are very grateful to them for offering a contract to sing in the chorus as part of the competition’s first prize, provided that a suitable standard has been reached.

For this year’s competition, we received 55 applications from emerging singers aged between 20 and 29 from across the UK. The preliminary round was judged online, making entry available to as wide a group as possible. Videos of a 10-minute performance of operatic aria and song were judged by our trustee and opera director Joy Atkinson and composer Philip Curran. They considered many different aspects of vocal performance, including vocal technique, musicality and stage presence, and looked for those who, in their opinion, were ready, or nearly ready, for life in the professional world. As usual the standard was very high and ten singers were chosen to perform in the semi-final on 1st November in Harvey Hall, part of the arts centre at St Swithun’s School in Winchester. They competed for £6, 800 in prize money, all sponsored by HCO Patrons.

After hearing all ten semi-finalists sing a 15-minute programme, the competition jury, made up of international soprano Patrica Rozario OBE (jury chair), CEO of The Grange Festival Tyler Stoops and conductor David Gibson, selected four singers to go through to the final, where a further 20-minute programme was performed.

The high quality of the singing meant judging the winner was not an easy task but baritone George Reynolds took first prize, made up of £2,500 and the offer of a contract with The Grange Festival to sing in the chorus in their 2026 season. Audience favourite counter-tenor Will Prior was awarded second prize, tenor Quito Clothier third prize and soprano Erin Rossington fourth prize.

This photo shows winner George Reynolds, accompanied by Hamish Brown.



Although we carry a financial deficit for our Singer of the Year competitions, we see the event as central to the delivery of our core objective, benefiting both tomorrow's vocal stars and the general public. It is open to the public, with free admission for under 18s and full-time students. The singers' programmes and the judges' adjudications increase the audience's understanding of vocal repertoire and the qualities required of a successful performer, whilst the competition itself is a key to advancement for young singers.

9. FUTURE PLANS

HCO's programme of activities in 2026 will be very similar to 2025, with our opera presentation (Verdi's La Traviata) in Christchurch, Blandford Forum and Winchester in April, a Masterclass in June to be led by our artistic director Lynton Atkinson and our opera producer Joy Robinson, recitals in Winchester and Wimborne in September, the Singer of the Year competition in Winchester in October and the Christmas recital in Wimborne in December. The key focus of our marketing activity around these events will be to increase ticket income.

Opera requires a good deal of forward planning and work towards our presentation of Benjamin Britten's Albert Herring in April 2027 was already underway before the end of 2025.

As with any charity, a review of HCO's strategy should be undertaken every few years. Members of the management committee and a selection of Patrons attended an away day in January 2026 to consider what should shape HCO's future and the feedback from this will inform our strategic review later in the year.

10. PUBLIC BENEFIT

The trustees keep in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The focus of our charitable activities during the year is set out above in the "Objects and Activities" and "Achievements and Benefits" sections above and these explain how as a charity we have delivered public benefit.

HCO has no involvement in environmental or social projects.

11. INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

David Ordman FCA MBA was appointed as Hurn Court Opera's independent examiner on 3rd March 2026.



For and on behalf of the trustees
Michael Hart
Chair of Trustees
1st June 2026

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF HURN COURT OPERA

I report on the accounts of the company for the 12 months ended 31st December 2025, which are set out on pages 12 and 13.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is appropriate.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- 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 the trustees concerning any 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'. The report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- To keep accounting records in accordance with section 137 of the Charities Act 2011; and
- To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



David Ordman B.Eng MBA FCA
Barthomley, Catherine Rd, Bowdon, Cheshire, WA142TD

21 April 2026

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
12 MONTHS ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
INCOME					
Charitable activities	1	-	32,303.36	32,303.36	29,885.21
Subscriptions, donations and grants	2	21,811.00	20,450.00	42,261.00	51,052.48
Gift Aid		10,458.80	-	10,458.80	8,578.70
Bank interest		1,627.00	-	1,627.00	349.04
Total		33,896.80	52,753.36	86,650.16	89,865.43
EXPENDITURE					
Charitable activities	1	51,118.98	47,643.36	98,762.34	77,475.61
Promotion of charitable activities		4,220.65	-	4,220.65	2,547.02
Central expenses	3	2,911.82	-	2,911.82	1,032.30
Total		58,251.45	47,643.36	105,894.81	81,054.93
SURPLUS / DEFICIT				- 19,244.65	8,810.50

Notes

1. Charitable activities are focused on meeting the charity's public good objectives through the provision of performance opportunities for young professional singers in areas which have limited access to live opera and operatic recitals
2. Friends and Patrons' subscriptions plus general donations (unrestricted funds) represent 52% of the total; donations towards specific performances and funds from grant-making bodies (restricted funds) represent 48%
3. Insurance, PRS and general admin costs

BALANCE SHEET
31st DECEMBER 2025

	Notes	31 December 2025			31 December 2024		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
FIXED ASSETS							
None	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
CURRENT ASSETS							
Debtors		9,737.75		9,737.75	10,400.00	-	10,400.00
Cash at bank		54,599.19	11,250.00	65,849.19	78,933.84	6,160.00	85,093.80
NET CURRENT ASSETS		64,336.94	11,250.00	75,586.94	89,333.84	6,160.00	95,493.80
CREDITORS							
Amounts falling due within one year		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		64,336.94	11,250.00	75,586.94	89,333.84	6,160.00	95,493.80

Notes

1. The charity has no premises and no other tangible assets