



Early Voices Wales
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31st August 2025



Registered Charity: 1208080

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

Year ending 31st August 2025

The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st August 2024.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered charity name:	Early Voices Wales / Lleisiau Cynnar Cymru
Charity number:	1208080
Principal office:	Early Voices Wales 42 Church Meadow Boverton Llantwit Major CF61 2AT
Trustees:	Michael Trickey (Chair) Fiona Senior (Treasurer) Jennifer Doolan (Secretary) Edwin Counsell Emrah Tokalac (appointed 24 th September, 2025)
Bankers:	The Co-operative Bank [Insert Bank Address]
Supporting Policies:	https://www.earlyvoiceswales.co.uk/policy-pdfs

Any queries arising from this report should be directed to The Secretary, via
hello@earlyvoiceswales.co.uk



Structure, Purpose and Activities

Early Voices Wales (EVW) is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) (Registered Charity No. 1208080). The objects as stated in its governing document, and for which the charity was established, are “to promote the awareness, understanding and enjoyment of music composed before 1750 for the public benefit of people in Wales and elsewhere, in particular but not exclusively through providing opportunities to participate in choral singing, undertaking educational events and cultural exchanges, arranging public performances and broadcasts”.

The CIO was registered in May 2024, making 2024/25 the first full reporting year. Following the success of the 2024 Early Voices festival, then an independent project by Anna Cristoni-Apel, the CIO was registered to enable this work for the public benefit within the CIO structure. The Fountain Singers, established and run by Anna Cristoni-Apel since 2015, was also brought into the CIO. EVW therefore has two main strands: the Fountain Singers, and a separate annual programme to advance EVW’s wider charitable objects, centred around the annual festival and outreach work.

The management of the CIO has remained the same since its registration, with Anna Cristoni-Apel as Artistic Director and Michael Trickey as Chair of the Board of Trustees. The first Trustees have remained in place, with the addition of Emrah Tokalac in September 2025.

The trustees are aware of their responsibilities in ensuring that the festival delivers identifiable benefits to the public in accord with established objectives and permitted activities. They are satisfied that the objects of the Charity and the activities of the Charity are within the definitions of Charitable Purposes as set down in the Act and refer to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit when reviewing their aims and objectives.

Reporting Year 2024-2025 Achievements and Performance

The Fountain Singers

The Fountain Singers actively promoted EVW’s charitable objects in bringing diverse early music to new singers and listeners. The choir had a successful year, growing in membership, audience numbers and reputation. Good retention and joining rates are testament to the choir’s welcoming, accessible ethos and the members’ enjoyment in participating. [Would be nice to have figures showing the increase in members?]

The Fountain Singers continue to showcase varied early music repertoire. In 2024/25 they gave December performances in Cardiff and Llantwit Major. This was a programme of Marian devotional music from the medieval and Renaissance periods. In November 2025, they performed at an illustrated talk on Palestrina organised in partnership with the Italian Cultural Centre and also recorded 2 short pieces for BBC Radio Wales broadcast. In May 2025, they joined with the Ewenny Chamber Choir for the central performance of EVW’s 2025 festival: “Palestrina 500!”. This was the Fountain Singers’ highest-grossing concert to date and the best-attended event of the festival. EVW’s two complementary strands benefitted through collaboration. The Fountain Singers are scheduled to sing at the EVW festival 2026.

The Festival and other activity

Successes



The 2025 festival, held on 1st and 9-11th May, was a success in a number of key ways. The range and scope of programming was a progression from the first festival in 2024, attracting more performers from outside Wales, including specialist vocal ensemble Iuchair, and the musical drama production *The Telling*. The festival also continued to create opportunities for more local performers, both professional and amateur, including the Ewenny Chamber Choir, Contraband, Scott Baker & Sarah Dunbar, and Sazava. The main programme was accompanied by successful outreach events (detailed below) which significantly widened the festival's community reach.

The 2025 festival exceeded its growth goals for ticket sales, engagement, and financial performance. 2025 was the first year that EVW applied to the ACW; the corresponding award was a significant milestone. EVW was also fortunate in attracting continued “seed-funding” support from SepSols Ltd for the 2025 and 2026 Festivals, recognising the success of the 2024 festival and the strength of the 2025 programme. EVW also launched a “Friends of Early Voices” scheme, creating a community of interested supporters who offer a financial donation to receive musical and networking benefits.

Challenges

Some unforeseen challenges were met with in 2024/25. Performer illness caused two artists to be unavailable at short notice but suitable adjustments were made. Live music from a nearby pub affected the audibility and experience of the Saturday events. Mitigation strategies are underway within the community and altered venue and schedules for 2026 should avoid disruption. The festival also grew quickly between 2024 and 2025: While a mark of success, this also brings challenges for practical management, especially around operational and administrative functions. EVW is exploring ways of finding additional operational support, including an increased pool of volunteers.

Legacy

Trustees are committed to managing EVW's significant growth sustainably through its early years and beyond, to further its charitable objects. Establishing the annual festival further will boost the public benefit it creates, including enhanced community engagement, progressively fuller programming, increased audience/performer reach, and superior performance quality. The Trustees recognise the importance of supporting diversity and inclusion as the festival expands, and maintaining the balance between local community focus and wider cultural reach. A key priority is early career support and youth engagement: In 2025/26 EVW will pilot an annual “residency”, offering young performer(s) a special position within the festival's programme.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

Accessibility and inclusivity is integral to EVW in fulfilling its core charitable purpose to promote participation and enjoyment of early music for everyone.

Festival 2025 outreach activity and audience reach

Accessibility and inclusivity underpins the EVW festival programme, promoting the charity's aims to reach groups which experience barriers (real or perceived) from enjoying early music. The Trustees are grateful to the performers and volunteers who helped us promote our values through outreach activity. We also thank EVW's outreach funders Ty Cerdd and Arts Council Wales.

At the time of reporting, outreach activity under the 2025 programme is still ongoing. This reflects the activity completion span allowed by Ty Cerdd: schools outreach attached to 2025 will complete by [March 2026]. To date, outreach activity has been highly successful and is building momentum through the festival's second year. In particular, the Trustees note:



- Three professional groups engaged in funded outreach during the festival: Iuchair, The Telling, and Scott Baker & Sarah Dunbar.
- Two free events were also held, reaching ~80:
 - An open sharing session with the Oasis One World Choir, workshopped with The Telling, was especially designed to foster participation from within refugee communities in South Wales. Promotion was targeted to the refugee community and other low-access groups.
 - Dr Lucy Donkin gave an educational talk to support the festival's musical performances.
- 48 complimentary tickets were provided for the festival's ticketed events to increase access, especially to refugee participants.
- Community outreach reached ~60: a children's group, a dementia group, and a wellbeing group.
- A further five outreach sessions are scheduled within the schools outreach period.

2025 activity, including outreach, reached audience of 490 to date, with a projected total of ~600 by the completion of schools outreach. When compared to ticket sales of 348, outreach numbers demonstrate the festival's success in harnessing ticketed programming as a generator of wider access, almost doubling reach. EVW hopes to increase outreach in the coming year, both in number and relative to ticket sales.

Ticket prices for concerts were £12 (under-16s free), rising to £15 (under-16s £5). Two of the weekend's events were free of charge and were well-attended. High ticket sales confirm that this represents fair pricing and good value for money. Audience feedback was also collected, confirming affordability and community value alongside high artistic quality.

The Festival venue was chosen with accessibility and inclusivity in mind. St Iltyd's Church, Llantwit Major is an accessible venue at the heart of the local community, used for wide-ranging secular events. The location has good public transport links, including by train from major urban centres, as well as serving a town population of >13,000.

Fountain Singers choir membership

The Trustees are active in upholding the accessibility and inclusivity of the Fountain Singers for choir members and potential members.

The Fountain Singers is designed to widen access, adopting measures which remain unusual in the field of early music groups. The non-audition choir welcomes all singers regardless of experience or training. The choir produces high-quality music while supporting its members to practise and enjoy early music at their own pace and level. Positive audience reception shows that these accessible values are consistent with high-quality performances.

To promote affordability, Fountain Singers member subscriptions are considered carefully. These are currently set at a suggested amount of £15/month. In special circumstances, subscriptions can be confidentially waived or reduced. Rehearsal and performance venues are chosen with consideration of accessibility, convenience, and journey affordability. The choir provides printed music for members as required.

Fountain Singers audience participation

Performance venues are chosen to maximise accessibility and reach and to serve both the urban and rural communities of Cardiff and the Vale. These are recurrently St. Iltyd's Church, Llantwit Major and St. John's Canton, both of which are accessible by public transport and which are within reach of sizeable local communities by foot.



Ticket prices are deliberately kept affordable. In 2025/26, these were set at £12 (under-16s free), demonstrating excellent value for money when compared to comparable events. Audience numbers for the Fountain Singers grew in 2024/25 [figures please], demonstrating the choir's increased reach and affordable pricing of tickets.

Financial Review

The Trustees continue to uphold strict ringfencing between the finances of the Fountain Singers and the charity's other activity. Accounts are managed separately and amounts carried forward are separated into restricted funds (Fountain Singers) and unrestricted reserves (festival and other projects). This reflects the charity's policy to protect the Fountain Singers from additional financial risk. These two areas of financial management are presented in turn.

The Fountain Singers

The Fountain Singers financial performance was strong in 2025. Both turnover and funds carried forward have increased in 2025 following:

- increased subscriptions from £12 monthly to £15;
- increased number of members;
- growing audience numbers for concerts.

.Subscriptions form the main income stream, amounting to £2,661 in 2024/25 (54%). Ticket sales generated 21% of funds in 2024/25.

Reserves - restricted funds

The funds carried forward at 31 August 2025 include £2,113.21 which are treated as restricted funds arising from the finances of the Fountain Singers. This compares with £853.43 in the previous year. Trustees have agreed that the level and use of additional restricted funds is to be managed in consultation with the members of the Fountain Singers.

Early Voices Wales Festival and other activity

The other funds carried forward at 31 August 2025 were £2,461. These derived from the finances of the EVW festival and are treated by trustees as reserves. In 2025 the festival continued to benefit primarily from generous public funding, from ACW (£4,650) and Ty Cerdd (£1,400). These awards, as well as continued private sponsorship from SepSols Ltd (£1,500), enabled EVW to implement its full planned programme in 2025. Other significant income included ticket and other sales, refreshments, subscriptions from the EVW Friends. The budget scale of the 2025 festival represented a considerable increase from 2024, a trajectory which the Trustees hope can be maintained sustainably into 2026 and beyond.

The 2025 festival was a financial success, with ticketed audience exceeding the target by some margin. The strategy of maintaining affordable pricing enabled broad access while growing audience numbers and revenue. The uptake of EVW's new "Friends" membership has been promising. While this is a fairly modest income stream at present, it is hoped that this membership will grow considerably through future years.

The Trustees are aware of future challenges for festival funding. Venue costs and travel expenses in particular have risen significantly and will affect the 2026 festival and other events. As the festival grows, core operational costs are likely to increase, many of which are ineligible for some funding. The Trustees also note that the last annual SepSols Ltd donation will be received in 2025/26. The Board is working on strategy to mitigate the foreseeable impacts of these changes to enable growth and resilience.



Unrestricted reserves

As a young charity, EVW is actively building reserves as part of its strategy of sustainable growth. Trustee policy is to build up and maintain minimum unrestricted reserves of £5,000 or 15% of the working festival budget (planned expenditure) in each year, whichever is the greater. However, as £5,000 is a very large percentage of each annual budget to date, the pace of reserve-building must be balanced against EVW's productivity and purpose in its early years.

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Volunteers

The Trustees gratefully acknowledge the essential work of the many volunteers who assist with marketing and administration, provide accommodation and hospitality for musicians, organise, make and sell refreshments, and assist with front-of-house management. **Many local musicians also donated their time for outreach activities, or on an expenses-only basis.**

Risk Management

The Trustees have sought to identify the major risks to which the charity is exposed; these are reviewed regularly and systems have been established to mitigate them. The Trustees are regularly updated on operational activity, at Board Meetings and by regular circulation and extra decision-making.

A Public Liability Insurance policy is provided annually by **[insert name of provider]**.

Financial risk management

Financial risk management and risk mitigation are addressed on a continual basis and the festival, Fountain Singers, and other activities are planned with careful regard to income expectations and financial sustainability. Strict financial ringfencing of the Fountain Singers income and expenditure ensures that the choir is protected from risks which may attach to the festival's more dynamic planning and activity. Contingency plans and financial safeguards are under constant review.

DBS and safeguarding

Early Voices Wales complies fully with the law and guidance on safeguarding, including for DBS certificates. Our policies and procedures are reviewed annually as a minimum and can be viewed here: <https://www.earlyvoiceswales.co.uk/policy-pdfs>