

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL LIVERPOOL
PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY HELD ON MONDAY 3rd November 2025 AT 5PM VIA
TEAMS AND AT LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC MUSIC ROOM.**

1. ATTENDANCE

Directors present: Louise Shepherd (Chair)
Vanessa Reed (Chief Executive)
Stephen Gregory
David Lloyd
Olga Smolen
Jernice Easthope
Sameeta Gahir
Camilla Mankabady (via Teams)

In attendance: Peter Garden, Chief Operating Officer (Performance & Learning)
Stephan Heaton, Executive Director (Finance & IT)
Sandra Parr, Artistic Planning Director (Orchestra & Ensembles)
Charlie Rachwal (Director of Audiences)
Plus 70 other members of the Society, 66 in person and 4 via Teams (and 4 members represented by Proxy votes).

Apologies: Lord Derby (President)
Apologies were received from 27 other members of the Society.

2. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed the members to the Annual General Meeting and her pleasure in working with Vanessa Reed, since her appointment as Chief Executive in May.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS

- a) The Chief Executive presented the Annual Report and Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025
- b) The Audited Accounts for the period ended 31 March 2025 were approved.

4. RE-APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

The Chair proposed, and members seconded, the resolution for the reappointment of Mitchell Charlesworth LLP as the Auditors of the Society's accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2025.

The meeting agreed to the re-appointment of Mitchell Charlesworth LLP as the Auditors of the Society's accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2025.

5. APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS

- 5.1** The meeting approved the recommendation of the Board of Directors to the appointment for a period of three years, following their co-option by the Board in December 2022 of

**Louise Shepherd
Stephen Gregory
Bryan Johnson
Camilla Mankabady**

- 5.2** The meeting approved the recommendation of the Board of Directors to the appointment for a period of three years, following their co-option by the Board in September 2024 of

Matthew Cooke

- 5.3** The meeting noted Vanessa Reed as Chief Executive and member of the Board of Directors.

Vanessa Reed (Chief Executive)

- 5.4** The meeting noted the following continuing Directors of the Board:

To retire in 2026

**Olga Smolen (end of first term)
Samita Gahir (end of second term)**

To retire in 2027

**Tom Lewis (end of second term)
Jernice Easthope (end of first term)
David Lloyd (end of first term)**

6. OTHER ORDINARY BUSINESS

No ordinary business had been notified to the Company Secretary in advance of the meeting.

**MEMBERS MEETING OF THE ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY
HELD ON MONDAY 3rd November 2025 AT 5.25PM VIA TEAMS AND AT
LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC MUSIC ROOM.**

ATTENDANCE

Directors present: Louise Shepherd (Chair)
Vanessa Reed (Chief Executive)
Stephen Gregory
David Lloyd
Olga Smolen
Jernice Easthope
Sameeta Gahir
Camilla Mankabady (via Teams)

In attendance: Peter Garden, Chief Operating Officer (Performance & Learning)

Stephan Heaton, Executive Director (Finance & IT)
Sandra Parr, Artistic Planning Director (Orchestra & Ensembles)
Charlie Rachwal (Director of Audiences)
Plus 70 other members of the Society, 66 in person and 4 via Teams (and 4 members represented by Proxy votes).

Apologies: Lord Derby (President)
Apologies were received from 27 other members of the Society.

WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

The Chief Executive thanked those who assisted organising the AGM and her appreciation for leading a team of dedicated and imaginative people.

1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

The Chief Executive outlined the social, economic and cultural impact of the Liverpool Philharmonic (RLP), providing the community with extraordinary moments of artistic excellence and acting as ambassadors of the city, touring internationally. The RLP uniquely combines an orchestra with its own venue, reaching almost 400,000 people in Liverpool, through a diverse concert programme- including family concerts, spoken word and film- meaning a robust business model is created. The organisation continues to support people "from cradle to career", particularly through In Harmony and the Youth Company.

The quality of the organisation's activities was highlighted, with audience ratings/capacity, an increase of followers on social media platforms, and streams on Spotify (the total number of listeners reaching 12.8 million), reflecting this. The RLP's critical acclaim was also noted, including praise for the partnership with Domingo Hindoyan and for the wind section's performance at the Barbican.

Recent milestones include the transformation to the stage- intention to continue to maintain the hall and raise money for air conditioning was noted- as well as the 10th anniversary of the Music Room, which has strengthened grass roots connections and collaboration with diverse local music organisations like Afrika Oye and DaDa fest.

Fundraising achievements, particularly for youth work, was also highlighted:

- £93,500 raised for the Emerging Musicians initiative
- £407,000 unrestricted income from individual donations
- A significant endowment from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to support In Harmony

Expansion of In Harmony to Barrow, Cumbria has made a notable community impact. The Chief Executive expressed gratitude to Michael Eakin and Peter Garden, for their support during the leadership transition. She emphasised her commitment to focusing on extraordinary moments of musical excellence and opportunities for young people. She also noted her focus on moving forward as the UK's oldest symphony audience but in a new chapter, embracing imagination, innovation and the city's creative energy.

Plans include:

- Investment in new facilities and rehearsal/recording spaces ('Abbey Road of the North')
- Building iconic important national and international partnerships- including with the BBC and other orchestras.
- Expanding fundraising and sponsorship beyond Liverpool
- Development of a new website, led by Charlie Rachwel's team

The Chief Executive reaffirmed her commitment to inclusivity, ensuring representation on stage, backstage, in our staff, and learning initiatives. She is passionate about the organisation reflecting the diversity of the world we live in. She also commented on utilising RLP's international status and global outlook to be open to new ideas and directions.

The Q&A session:

1. Plastic Glasses: A member expressed dissatisfaction with plastic glasses. The Chair thanked them for their feedback
2. Film Concerts: A member requested more film with orchestra events. The Chair and Sandra Parr acknowledged their popularity- "watch this space".
3. Economic and Social Impact: A member asked whether efforts had been made to measure the Philharmonic's social contribution. The Chief Executive confirmed plans to commission a new social impact study, to capture this data.
4. In Harmony Research: Helen and Mark Clegg asked about quantitative research on In Harmony's outcomes, e.g. improved school attendance. Peter Garden noted that longitudinal studies (2009–2019) show consistent results in improving well-being, resilience, skills for life, confidence, community and in family life. While some early data suggested links to improved academic performance, he noted that no direct causation can be established, though the programme clearly supports the underpinning skills for learning.
5. Sunday Concert Times: Members raised concerns about earlier starts at 2pm. Sandra Parr explained that this increased hall usage in the evening, therefore it was a 'business case'.
6. Expansion of In Harmony: Helen and Mark Clegg asked about extending to other low-income areas, such as L7 and L8. Peter Garden confirmed this was being explored, supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation endowment, as well as working with the neighbourhood management team of City Council to identify where their highest priority areas would be, initially focusing on northern areas of the city, before expanding further afield.
7. Diversity of Staff and Orchestra: Andrew Hobson asked about workforce diversity. The Chief Executive highlighted progress through new recruitment practices, with more improvement to be aligned with the organisation's 5 year strategic plan.
8. Musician's Dress Code: Andrew Walker asked about returning to white shirts and bow ties. The Chief Executive responded that there were no plans to revert to this, expressing that the RLP seems to be "ahead of the curve" in adopting a more contemporary and inclusive style. Members expressed support for the more relaxed dress code, which promotes comfort and attracts broader audiences.

2. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was tabled.

Musicians, Ruth Davies, Helen Wilson and Benjamin Powell were introduced. The meeting concluded at 6.22pm.