Annual Report

01/01/2024 - 31/12/2024

Reference and administration

Charity name and number

London City Brass (1186265)

Principal address

249 Buckhurst Way
Buckhurst Hill
Essex
IG9 6JB

Trustees

Jack Boyles	11/11/2019-current	Chair
Josephine Ashdown	11/11/2019-current	Secretary
Hannah Scales	11/11/2019-current	Treasurer
Laura Kirk	26/01/2022-current	
Laura Fox	08/02/2023-current	

Structure and governance

London City Brass (LCB) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered with the Charities Commission, registration number 1186265.

LCB is governed by a Constitution adopted 11 November 2019.

Trustees are appointed or re-appointed by election at an annual general meeting.

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Charitable objectives

LCB set out the following charitable objectives in their constitution:

- To advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects by any means the trustees see fit, including through the presentation of public concerts and recitals.
- To support such other purposes deemed to be exclusively charitable within the laws of England and Wales as the trustees in their absolute discretion from time to time determine.

Activities undertaken for public benefit

In planning the activities of London City Brass, the Trustees have taken into account the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Over the course of 2024, we carried out a large number of performances for public benefit, as well as our usual schedule of rehearsals. This year was particularly special as it marked our fifth anniversary as a band. Regular rehearsals are an essential feature for all members to feel part of a welcoming and sociable community. We also gained four new band members this year. Our first event of the year was our Spring concert, showcasing all the new music we learned and prepared from January through to April. The concert brought a varied and entertaining programme of music to a public audience, with free entry and informative, educational introduction to each piece from our conductor. Concerts are greatly enjoyed by members as they get a chance to learn new music to a high standard and to perform.

Following this successful return to public performance, we began the summer programme of bandstands, starting with Victoria Park. The bandstand season is always the perfect way to provide varied musical programmes to audiences across London for free. We also played at Clapham Common and Regent's Park bandstands in 2024, building on existing relationships with the community organisations and authorities that organise the musical events in those areas. Each bandstand had a substantial audience of all generations who were introduced to the sounds of a brass band through popular music alongside traditional repertoire, free of charge. This year we also travelled to Devon for the Bandamonium, a fairly new brass band festival which invites bands from around the country to tour around villages bringing music to the area. This was greatly enjoyed by members both with the social aspect and the musical opportunities. Playing in new contexts is good experience for the band and the trip was affordable and accessible.

In September we held a concert to celebrate our fifth anniversary with our supporters in the community. We performed in St Barnabas Church in Clapham once again after our first concert there the previous year. Celebrating this milestone was a wonderful way to bring everyone together and to build even more on our existing sense of community. Band members shared testimonials and speeches about how meaningful the band has been for them, and the audience enjoyed a programme of our all time favourites.

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In November, we were able to travel down to Lewes for Bonfire Night, a significant cultural event in the South of England which also enabled us to practice our marching, another brass band tradition. We joined a local band - this year with Bandamonium as well, we have really enjoyed meeting and playing with other bands around the country.

Christmas brought some of our long-standing annual gigs and the opportunity to share our hard work with the public and with friends. Our free annual concert had another huge audience - once again, because of our central location and free entry, we attracted many audience members who had never heard of us before, as well as regular supporters. Other Christmas events included carolling at the O2 shopping centre, Stepney City Farm, St Margaret Pattens and St Barnabas' churches, and the Famous Royal Oak pub in Muswell Hill. We really value these community events, which were attended by people of all ages and backgrounds. Children were able to take part with percussion, contributing to their understanding and enjoyment of music and brass bands. Members of the public could also join in with singing, giving them an opportunity to take part in the music-making. Our Christmas performances brought musical enjoyment and education to the public, as well as chances to perform for our members, which is a valuable part of musical education and personal development. With so many events in 2024, we learned a huge amount of new music of different genres and styles, widening and growing members' musical skills and knowledge. We were also able to raise money through donations which support the activities undertaken by the band to benefit the public.

As well as our in-person engagements, we continued to foster a thriving online community through social media and our website. Sharing videos of rehearsals and performances helped to bring brass band music to a wider audience. Evidence of our extended reach includes over 1,000 Facebook followers and over 700 Instagram followers. We also continued to run our Friends of LCB programme. This initiative allows more of our followers to feel involved and engaged in the band's activities through our regular updates and quarterly newsletters, while providing financial support for our activities.

Main achievements

Over the course of 2024 we put on 16 successful, high-quality performances:

- Spring Concert
- Victoria Park Bandstand
- Bandamonium
- Clapham Common Bandstand
- Regent's Park Bandstand
- 5th Anniversary Concert
- Lewes Bonfire Night Parade
- Cricket Builds Hope Carol Service
- Carolling at Stepney City Farm
- Carolling at the O2 #1
- Carols for St Margaret Patterns
- Christmas Concert
- Carolling in the City
- Carolling at the Famous Royal Oak
- Carolling at the O2 #2
- Carols for St Barnabas

We reached a high standard of performance and saw members grow in confidence and in musical ability, a great achievement for us.

We have maintained a sense of community and belonging integral to our ethos as a band. This was achieved through regular social events in addition to weekly rehearsals and performances.

The continued development of our Friends of LCB scheme supports the work of the band financially as well as advancing the public understanding and appreciation of brass band music.

Plans for the future

LCB will be maintaining our charitable objectives in 2025 and our plans for the future continue to support these objectives.

We plan to continue supporting other charitable organisations through fundraising at events, in addition to spreading awareness and appreciation of the brass band music genre through free concerts and public performances across London.

We hope to return to Bandamonium in Devon this year as well as making our inaugural performance on Deal Memorial Bandstand as part of our programme for 2025 where we can take the brass band genre to new audiences and further develop the community spirit within the band itself.

We will continue to challenge and develop our members' and audiences' education and appreciation of brass band music with an expanded and varied repertoire and programme of events.

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Financial review

Financial position

2024 has been another strong year for LCB's finances. The band's income continues to exceed its costs on an ongoing basis, allowing for investment in band assets and activities as the Trustees deems appropriate. Subs from members remains our major income stream, and adequately covers the running costs of the band. Although our venue hire costs have increased further in 2024 we have been able to absorb the increases with no requirement for increased subs. Performance income has increased this year. All of these factors leave the band in a strong position coming into 2025.

With the balance of the band's account now sitting significantly higher than the unrestricted reserve position in the current account, we are exploring savings accounts to hold carried forward surplus. The trustees continue to consider the best way to invest carried forward surplus into the future of the band, and supporting future charitable activities.

Policy on reserves

The trustees have set a policy to ensure an unrestricted reserve of £3,000 as a minimum is kept in the current account. This is to ensure short term commitments such as Musical Director expenses and hire of rehearsal premises can be sustained for at least 6 months.

Declaration

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Jack Boyles

Chair