



President: Sarah, Countess of Leicester

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Ann Kerrison  
Deputy Town Clerk  
Fakenham Town Council  
Fakenham Connect  
Oak Street  
Fakenham  
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Dear Ann

### **Market Tolls Grant Application – Fakenham Choral Society**

Thank you for providing the documents to enable the choir to apply for a grant.

We hope this covering letter provides sufficient additional information, over and above the basic application form and budget.

#### **Background**

Fakenham Choral Society is celebrating its 50th anniversary with its 2023/2024 season. Founded in 1973, its inaugural performance of Handel's Messiah took place the following year. Since then, it has performed at least two concerts each year (except during the Covid pandemic), mostly in Fakenham, but also in surrounding towns and villages. These concerts have included the major choral repertoire, less well-known pieces and modern works, often using professional soloists and musicians.

The Society's concerts are a key part of the annual cycle of events in Fakenham, drawing appreciative audiences from across north Norfolk. Consequently, these bring people into the town centre and, with weekly rehearsals held at the Salvation Army Hall, local businesses benefit too. For outreach purposes, smaller groups from the choir also visit local care homes at Christmas as well as singing in the town centre on market day. It has also been part of the annual Fakenham Church Christmas Tree Festival for the last few years.

As a registered charity, Fakenham Choral Society's aim is to advance, develop, improve, and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of music. This aim applies equally to its singing members as to its audiences. It is well documented that listening and participating in music promotes wellbeing and social interaction. The choir's ongoing ambition is to offer these opportunities within easy reach for those living and working in rural north Norfolk and at an affordable price.

### **The grant request**

As a 'Thank you' to the people of Fakenham for supporting the choir for half a century, we have decided that our Christmas concert should be free to attend, simply asking for a retiring donation. We hope, especially with the ongoing cost of living crisis, that free entry to our most popular concert is a tangible way of showing our gratitude and opens the door to those who perhaps have not experienced this type of concert or music before.

The enclosed budget provides a breakdown of known expenses (c£3,571) and estimated income (c£2,150). We have already secured £570 in business sponsorship and, if previous years are an indication, expect this to increase. However, we never over-estimate or take for granted what has happened in the past.

Although the choir has been actively fund-raising in preparation for its 50th anniversary, we would very much appreciate the support of Fakenham Town Council in awarding a grant of £1,000 towards the Christmas concert costs.

### **The rest of the 50th anniversary season**

We have an ambitious (and therefore more costly) year ahead. This includes a performance of Verdi's magnificent Requiem in Fakenham Parish church next April, with international soloists and a full orchestra. There will be one of our very popular Come & Sing events in March with the concluding concert in June being more light-hearted on a 'Sea' theme, and including The Pirates of Penzance by Gilbert & Sullivan.

Knowing that the 50th concert season would cost considerably more than usual, we have been fortunate in securing a grant of £3,351 from the North Norfolk District Council Arts & Culture Fund. To put this into perspective, though, the estimated cost of the season's three performances is in the region of £13,000. This is over and above our regular outgoings, such as weekly rehearsals and insurance.

To secure our plans there have been cake, make and plant sales, an open garden, a history of Fakenham Choral Society book (now on sale) plus a Grand Draw with wonderful prizes donated by choir members and local businesses and organisations. Our Friends of FCS group has also sponsored elements of the season and we are actively raising awareness of this very special birthday with a printed leaflet, press releases and social media posts.

The choir Committee, members and music team are behind what we are sure will be a year to remember. We do hope that Fakenham Town Council can be part of this by supporting Fakenham Choral Society in its ambition.

Please find attached the application form, a budget for the Christmas concert and a copy of a bank statement. If you would like to see our constitution or other policy documents (Equality & Diversity, Privacy, Safeguarding) please do let me know.

With kind regards and thanks



Tracey Thompson  
Secretary, Fakenham Choral Society.