



The Old Southendian Organ Society (OSOS)



OSOS Annual General Meeting

Chairman's Report April 2026

During the past year OSOS has increased its versatility by branching out in several new directions. Over the course of five events, fruitful liaisons have been made with Southend Symphony Orchestra, the recently founded SHSB Charitable Trust and a number of individual organists playing our instrument for the first time - the latter at two 'Come and Play' sessions when the organ was made available to anyone who would like to try it (ranging in experience from complete beginners upwards). The organ took on a symphonic role in a joint autumn concert with SSO, we were involved in the Charitable Trust's fund-raising Music Marathon and we presented another Showcase concert featuring musicians from the school. Further details of these will be found in Joe Zammit's report, to follow.

Additionally, Warren Symes' welcome return has brought about a regeneration of interest in the organ by school music students, an increasing number of whom are learning to play (an initiative with which I am pleased to be involved). You can read more about them in Warren's report and we look forward to their participation in our future events.

Since coming under the care of Andrew Stevens and Nigel Wood the organ's reliability and tuning stability have shown a tremendous improvement and, to the pleasure of all who play it, is now consistently giving of its very best.

In conclusion, I would once again like to thank my colleagues of the OSOS committee for their hard work in not only maintaining the society's success – but, indeed, progressively enhancing it through their enthusiasm and genuine dedication.

Gerald Usher



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Treasurer's Report April 2026

Income

Over the year from April 2025 to March 2026 donations and membership received amounted to £1932.55. This is a great increase on the previous year and total fundraising is now close to £95k since fundraising began in 2014.

Ticket sales and donations received at events, provided an income of £2531.65. This is also a great result and something for the society to use as a benchmark for future years.

Expenses

The general maintenance of the organ including a tuning session for £300 has been paid by SHSB. Additional work, including the digital bass, has taken place during the financial year 25-26 but to date no invoices have been received. Suitable funds are in place when the amounts are due in the next financial year.

To facilitate the concerts and events OSOS paid a total of £1560.88 in fees and expenses. The profit for the concerts and events was therefore £970.77.

Summary

2025-2026 has resulted in a profit of £2876.66, although we do have outstanding liabilities as mentioned above. The cash on account remains healthy.

In addition to expenses accrued in 2024-2025, due in 2025-2026, we are also preparing to purchase equipment for the artificial reverb project taking place this year. It is therefore important we continue to work on fundraising through membership, donations, concerts and events.

It continues to be important that we retain appropriate funds in the account to be able to support any future emergency maintenance.

Jonathan Roberts

**OLD SOUTHENDIAN ORGAN SOCIETY
BALANCE SHEET**

Income	25-26	24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	TOTAL
Membership	80.00	80.00	70.00	80.00	80.00	1460.00
Donations	1852.55	894.05	14954.40	2479.05	746.44	80319.75
Events	2531.65	333.41	2886.46	967.76	193.12	11944.96
HMRC	19.53	0.00	171.45	-	-	423.98
Total Income	<u>4483.73</u>	<u>1307.46</u>	<u>18082.31</u>	<u>3526.81</u>	<u>1019.56</u>	<u>94148.69</u>
Expenses						
Maintenance	-	10000.00	4225.00	122.50	766.84	62581.72
Trips/Music	-	-	-	-	119.57	319.57
Marketing	46.19	-	232.03	320.87	-	2284.35
Crew/Equipment	-	280.75	-	450.00	-	1015.47
Concert Costs	1560.88	-	2026.25	810.24	-	5198.87
Gifts & Donations	-	-	-	-	56.49	232.44
Total Expenses	<u>1607.07</u>	<u>10280.75</u>	<u>6483.28</u>	<u>1703.61</u>	<u>942.90</u>	<u>71632.42</u>
NET INCOME	<u><u>2876.66</u></u>	<u><u>-8973.29</u></u>	<u><u>11599.03</u></u>	<u><u>1823.20</u></u>	<u><u>76.66</u></u>	<u><u>22516.27</u></u>
Cash Float	157.00					
Cash in account	22359.27					



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Publicity and Communications Report April 2026

2025 has been an exciting year for OSOS through our events and collaboration with the school and beyond – and 2026 is already shaping up to be similarly positive.

We have put a special focus on making external connections this year, with a very successful “Open Morning” in June, as part of the Royal College of Organists “Play the Organ” initiative for 2025, leading us to repeat the opportunity again in February. The original event welcomed over 30 participants of all abilities and interests – some observers, some keen pianists, some experienced organists wanting to try our special instrument, and of course many members of the school community past taking the opportunity to return, listen and play with nostalgia. While the second event had fewer attendees, it was nonetheless worthwhile, with prospective students of the school and indeed students from the lower school attending to play the instrument. We also welcomed visitors from Thaxted church (where Holst played the famous Lincoln organ), and made a connection to their team. On both occasions, some “Q&A” and the rare chance to see a little of the organ’s mechanisms, electronics, and 1,228 speaking pipes “behind the scenes” was warmly welcomed.

The second external connection came in the form of a special concert with Southend Symphony Orchestra, led by Richard Brittain and conducted by John Chillingworth. The orchestra delighted a packed audience with a programme comprising Haydn’s ‘Cello Concerto in C’, Walton’s ‘Crown Imperial’, the world première of Edmund Griffiths’s ‘Freude Auf Dem Land’, and the famous ‘Organ Symphony’ by Saint-Saëns. We welcomed renowned musician Roderick Elms as our guest organist for the event, who enjoyed sharing the organ in an orchestral role and also contributed to the pre-concert talk alongside Gerald Usher and orchestra member and composer Edmund Griffiths. Joanna Smith also joined as a special guest to play the virtuosic orchestral piano duet part for the Saint-Saëns, ably assisted by ‘secondo’ Ethan Ng from the school. John Chillingworth exchanging his conductor’s baton for his cello to lead the orchestra for the Hadyn concerto was a particularly captivating and inspiring section of the evening. Thanks to SSO and all participants and attendees for making this spectacular event such a success.

The third external connection came as part of a fundraising “Musical Marathon” event in December, presented by the newly-formed SHSB Charitable Trust. This was a wonderful

celebration of musicians and musical success at the school with past and present students and staff joining together with other friends of the school to make music “around the clock” from 9am to 9pm for 12 hours straight! We were pleased to participate with four OSOS members providing organ music, along with music from the SHSB Organ Society members, for a substantial part of the day. The singing of the School Song to robust organ accompaniment marked just over “half way” through the day’s efforts. Thank you to all who supported, tuned in to the livestream, sponsored requests (including ‘A Whiter Shade of Pale’ and ‘In the bleak midwinter’ on the organ!), and donated as part of this novel initiative which raised £2,500 to support the school.

In the summer, we were also pleased to contribute an extended article to the revamped ‘Old Southendian’ magazine, reviewing the extensive activities of the society since the Old Southendian Association last published a magazine in 2018/19.

Our showcase concert in February featured exceptional performances from current students, alongside equally enjoyable contributions by staff and Old Southendians. The audience were treated to transcriptions for organ of popular classics, such as Satie’s ‘Gymnopédie No.1’ and the Largo from The New World Symphony; the sound of song including the folk tune ‘The Salley Gardens’, Gershwin’s ‘Someone to watch over me’; plus compositions for organ, piano and saxophone! The evening closed with Bach’s Prelude No.1 BWV 553 played by student organist Tom Cleary. See our website for the full programme.

Looking ahead, we have events planned which continue to both expand our horizons and connections, while providing a platform for local musicians, especially current and former students, to share their talents. In particular, we look forward to our next concert “Fancy Footwork: four centuries on the dance floor” with Stephen King of Brentwood Cathedral on Saturday 27th June 2026 at 7:30pm. Further news on our next “showcase” events will follow – look out for details via our mailing list and website. Another new collaboration for 2026 will be with award-winning local choir Gaudeamus on Saturday 7th November 2026 at 2:30pm, who will explore the role of the organ in accompaniment. Save the date!

We are grateful to all whose support (in so many ways) sustains the Society financially, whether that be at events, through regular donations, or other means. Your contributions ensure we are able to look after the organ well, while encouraging and supporting the organists at the school. Finally, thank you to the school – from the Music Department, to the Premises Team, and beyond, there are many who enable and support the Society’s work and continue to provide the best education and opportunities to the next generation.

Thank you for your interest and support, and I look forward to sharing more again in 2027!

Joseph Zammit



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School Liaison Report April 2026

School Organist

It has been a pleasure to teach the School Organist, Jack Brand (Year 13). Jack is innately musical and has been a wonderful role model to other students who aspire to be the School Organist. Indeed, at the End of Term Assembly in December 2025, Jack was commended by the Headteacher, Mrs Worth, for his commitment to playing the organ at assemblies on a weekly basis throughout his time in Year 12. Besides the organ, Jack is a competent pianist, studies music at A-level and leads the Key Stage 3 String Quartet. Recently, Jack composed a piece for the organ as part of his A-level Music coursework.

Jack intends to continue to learn the organ during his time at University, and I look forward to welcoming him back to our school to perform at concerts for OSOS in the future.

Organ Society

Members of the School Organ Society meet every Monday at 1.30pm in the Main Hall. There are currently three students from Year 12 and one from Year 7 who attend Organ Society on a weekly basis. The students who attend Organ Society are very committed to learning to play the organ. Indeed, all the Year 12 students have performed at whole school assemblies, House Assemblies, and in the recent OSOS showcase. Consequently, the Year 12 students have been able to deputise for the School Organist, which has enabled Jack to allocate more time to preparing for his A-level exams.

When students attend the School's Organ Society, the weekly focus is varied with specific workshops on pedal technique, registration (appropriate selection of organ stops), improvisation, advice on performing repertoire and, of course, preparing students to play the School Song. In the OSOS showcase in February of this year, all of the Year 12 students took part and performed music in a variety of different styles. In the lead up to the concert, time was spent preparing students to perform in our Monday workshops. This approach facilitated collaborative learning, where all the students were exposed to the various challenges involved in performing repertoire from the 17th to the 20th centuries.

There are two other students in Year 9 and Year 10, who are eager to learn the organ. However, they are unable to attend the Monday workshop, as they take part in other

ensembles at lunchtime on Monday. In the Summer Term, an additional workshop will be offered on a Friday lunchtime to enable those students to learn to play the organ.

Overall, the tradition of students playing the School Organ at weekly assemblies, concerts, and House Assemblies is very much alive and well at our school. Indeed, with six students eager to learn the organ from Year 7 to Year 12, the SHSB Organ Society is set to continue this tradition for many, many wonderful years to come!

Warren Symes