

# **2021 - 2022** Annual Report





## Welcome

2020 to 2021 was a year of forward thinking and strategic planning for Berkshire Maestros as we came out the back of the pandemic and sought to reassess where we were and look ahead to where we want to be. Having not had a 'normal' year since 2019, it felt appropriate that we spent some time reassessing amongst resuming all those amazing opportunities that we had missed between 2020 and 2021.

Here are some of our highlights:

- We engaged with 100% of schools in Berkshire – well above the national average of 86%, and fully delivered on all key areas related to our government funding as laid out in the National Plan for Music Education.
- We continued our focus on developing inclusive music opportunities, delivering 8 inclusion projects in different settings ranging from SEND settings to Alternative Provision. This enabled us to fully complete 72%, and partially complete the remaining 28% of Year 1 actions in our inclusion strategy.
- We launched the Berkshire Early Years Music Network to bring together expertise and to share resources and training for all those working with under 5's across Berkshire.
- Our continuation rate from the First Access programme, In2Music, increased due to the fact that 24 schools bought the programme in for a full year.
- We invested in the hire of a new area as part of Berkshire Youth's Waterside Centre in Newbury Town Centre. We equipped the space with a range of contemporary instruments and music technology with a view to starting a contemporary music centre and safe space for young people to make, create and perform music.
- We successfully fundraised for the following:
  - £500 from The Golsoncott Foundation for a project with the RPO
  - £5000 from Music Mark for a project with the RPO
  - £4967 from Greenham Trust & West Berkshire for Singing Cafes
  - £252 from Parkinsons UK Bracknell Branch for our Singing Cafes
  - £250 from Thatcham Town Council for Singing Cafes

- We resumed our wonderful end of term music centre concerts and County ensemble concerts, and we were particularly delighted to be able to take the County Choir and Orchestra away to Scotland in the summer on their long-awaited tour.
- We resumed our Junior Music Festivals and over 1000 children participated in these wonderful singing festivals across three events throughout the year.
- We started to run regular Youth Music Nights in partnership with Berkshire Youth, featuring and showcasing talented young musicians from West Berkshire.
- We have developed our Singing Cafes for older people, Dementia and Parkinsons sufferers into some Care Homes and currently have 8 sessions running on a weekly basis.
- We reviewed our ensemble provision to ensure that we had clear progression routes in place and so that students were able to join an ensemble once they had learnt as little as 5 notes. We renamed and re-marketed the groups to ensure clarity and clear communication.
- We continued to support those on low income with reduced rates on music lessons and expanded this to include a reduction on instrument hire and exam fees as well.
- We started working with some wonderful new partners that will enable us to reach even more children and young people; Aspire2, Bradfield College, Norden Farm and Brighter Futures for Children.

And finally, we spent the year writing a new strategy as well as reshaping our vision, mission and values as we move forward into 2023 and beyond. I am delighted with what has been achieved as well as with the huge variety of input we acquired from staff, stakeholders, partners and schools.

I am extremely proud of what has been achieved in 21-22, we have a hugely talented pool of people that work tirelessly every day to make all this happen and I want to thank each and every one of them for their hard work and commitment.

Dawn Wren  
CEO



## Executive Summary

2021-2022 was a year of re-growth following the impact of the global pandemic on the previous two years. Throughout this period Berkshire Maestros has striven to keep delivering high quality musical opportunities for young people.

The academic year started positively with schools reopening however we still faced an Autumn with an increase in Covid cases which meant we had to prepare flexibly for some events. Student numbers steadily increased throughout the year and this has enabled us to maintain and end the year in a solid financial position from which to continue the growth in student numbers and continue offering a range of musical opportunities to young people and adults across Berkshire.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our staff—the teaching staff who continued to provide lessons, ensembles and school activities through a variety of formats as well as the support teams, who keep everything running in the background and support our customers and pupils.

## Objectives and activities

Berkshire Maestros exists to provide a high quality, comprehensive musical experience to the widest group of pupils, regardless of their background or ability. We work with schools and a wide range of professional and voluntary sector partners to provide an innovative range of creative and performance opportunities for our students.

On behalf of Arts Council England (ACE), Berkshire Maestros leads the Berkshire Music Education Hub and is responsible for the delivery of the National Plan for Music Education (NPME) across Berkshire.



Our objectives are delivered through individual and group tuition in voice and a variety of instruments in schools and in four large music centres in Bracknell, Newbury, Reading and Windsor as well as three smaller satellite centres in Caversham, Emmbrook and Bulmershe. Wokingham Borough students attend the music centres in Bracknell and Reading as well as the two Wokingham satellite centres above. Tuition is supplemented by a wide range of ensembles and other extension activities at all levels. Services are contracted directly to parents and carers of students, to schools and to Arts Council England who are responsible for the distribution and management of the Music Education Grant provided by the Department for Education (DfE).

## Achievements, performance and KPIs

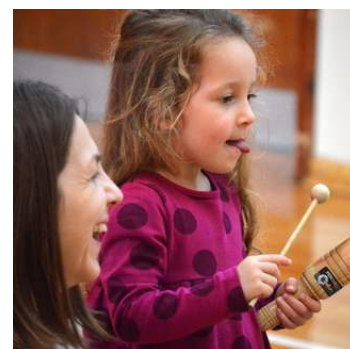
As lead organisation for Berkshire Maestros Music Education Hub, we continue to fully implement the National Plan for Music Education, including all core and extension roles. In the annual feedback letter from Arts Council England, our particular strengths have been cited as:

- The Hub was able to demonstrate the outcomes from its new inclusion programme and fully-staffed partnership team. This has seen re-activated partnership working supporting the engagement of young people in places previously not reached by the hub - e.g. Readipop's delivery in Pupil Referral Units, work with Berkshire Youth and the establishment of a music centre in a youth centre in West Berkshire. This shows a positive focus on diversifying delivery, which is very relevant post covid.
- WCET (Whole Class Ensemble Tuition) was lower than the Hub's historically high figures. With total schools engaged at 36%, lower than national average of 43%. This may be due to challenges returning to schools after covid and the Hub needing to add a small charge to schools. Despite this 10.55% of pupils engaged in WCET compared to 5.2% National Average, which shows that schools that did engage were strongly committed.
- The Hub reported delivering 359 ensembles, which is a significant increase but there is a long way to go to reach pre-covid figures of over 1,000. However, the Hub had maintained engagement with young people during lockdown is well placed to return to delivery.
- The Hub now has full-staffing capacity and benefits such as school engagement are apparent.
- The audit of the Hub's governance group was well carried out with a comprehensive review of the skills and representation of the Hub and clear priorities for future recruitment. It demonstrates that the Hub has a clear idea of the value of inclusion and how to measure representation.

ACE has assessed the level of risk attached to the DfE funding as minor risk compared to a moderate risk in the last financial year.

## Early Years

Our Early Years work is returning from being significantly impacted by the pandemic and we worked hard to build back again to pre-Covid numbers across the year. There is no denying that financial concerns for families are having an impact on this sort of activity however we are continuing to champion the benefits of music at an early age.



## First Access

First Access (government funded whole class instrumental programme) continued to be well received in schools despite the fact that we had to introduce a small charge in September 2021 to ensure we were still able to provide the service cost-effectively. 114 schools signed up which was a 13% decrease from the previous year, however there was an increase in the number of children participating as schools signed up more classes (an increase of 11% from 5,970 children to 6,630 children). Noticeably, there were 10 new schools signed-up for 2021-2022 and 25 returning schools who didn't have First Access in 2019-2020. Due to 24 schools taking up the full three term offer, the progression from First Access increased. We continued to support the iCollege in West Berkshire (alternative provision for learners unable to access mainstream education) with a band project using guitars/keys/drums and including song-writing and recording.

## **Instrumental & Vocal Tuition in Schools & Music Centres**



We continued to provide a wide range of opportunities to children and young people including instrumental and vocal lessons. Our student numbers increased steadily over the year however we would like to have seen greater growth here. The majority of our teachers were observed with a new Teaching & Learning Policy in place. We supplemented our weekly provision with a variety of holiday courses as well as music theory lessons for Grade 5 and Grades 6-8.

We formed a new partnership with Berkshire Youth, in particular in hiring a space as part of their Youth and Community Centre in Newbury. We equipped the space with a range of contemporary instruments and music technology equipment with a view to opening a contemporary music centre and safe space for young people to make, create and perform music. We undertook some trial courses in the Spring and Summer terms and gathered feedback from young people as to what activity they would like to see. Regular sessions will start in this space from September 2022.

## **Ensembles, County Groups & Events**

September 2021 saw a return to regular ensemble rehearsals apart from the very start of term with some large wind and brass groups maintaining outdoor rehearsals. We were able to resume concerts with live audiences in indoor spaces, which was incredibly special having not been able to do that for some time. We were particularly pleased that the County Choir and Orchestra were able to tour to Scotland in August having not been able to tour since 2018. We were able to resume our 'Have a Go' events which enable young people from all over the County to come and try out several instruments before making a decision about which one they would like to learn. We also held three competitions: Berkshire Young Singer, Young Guitarist and Young Pianist of the year, in partnership with the Windsor Festival. Our Soundstage rock and pop bands performed at the Readipop Festival for the first time and we started regular youth music nights championing young singer/songwriters/musicians and giving them a platform to perform. We held concerts in wonderful venues both in Berkshire and outside of Berkshire, from The Hexagon to Dorchester Abby. We also worked with professional artists such as Bob Chilcott, Brindley Sherratt and John Trill.



## **Instrument Hire Scheme**

We continued to run a successful instrument hire scheme which helped children and young people access a range of instruments. We continued to hire out over 7,000 instruments in 2021-2022, this was a decrease of 10% on last year due to the lower number of children learning an instrument.

## Support for Schools

We offered Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for schools both online and face to face in order to maximise accessibility for staff working in schools. Topics covered included the new Model Music Curriculum Scheme of Work, Sampling, Drill & Grime Production, Composition and Improvisation and Singing Games for EYFS & KS1. We send school newsletters out twice a term to communicate our offer to schools clearly and to help open up those conversations with schools. Through the Hub's partnership with Charanga, supporting schools with CPD and Training has benefited 62 teachers from 49 schools. Our School Development Managers continue to build relationships with schools and discuss ways in which the Music Hub can further support music in schools.

## Singing Strategy

The singing strategy continues to be implemented and updated according to local need. The two Singing Development Coordinators have established themselves successfully amongst schools in their area and continue to support schools and colleagues to enable high quality singing from a young age. These were all hugely successful with incredibly positive feedback from parents and teachers alike 'Just wanted to say a huge thank you for all your hard work with the Junior Music Festival It was amazing! So much thought had gone into the whole production — loved the junk band and also the way the orchestra introduced each instrument to the children. So much learning going on there! Our children had a brilliant time and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.'



## Examinations

We continued to run Trinity and ABRSM exam sessions for our students with a slight decrease in total entries from 745 last year to 634 exam entries in 2021-2022. Of these 40% passed, 39% gained a merit and 16% gained a distinction. 9.4% of the total number of entries were Grade 8, this is an increase of 52 entries compared to last year. 35% of the Grade 8 entries achieved a distinction, 55% achieved a merit and 10% passed. 1.4% of the total number of entries were for ARSM/Advanced Certificate/Diploma level, this was an increase of 5 entries compared to last year. 44% of the ARSM/Certificate entries achieved a distinction and 56% of them achieved a merit.

## Partnerships

We continue to have a strong focus on partnerships as demonstrated by our Senior Leader role (Partnerships, Progression & Development) as well as our Middle Leader role of Partnerships & Inclusion Development Manager. Both colleagues have worked on maintaining current partners as well as seeking out new partners where the need arises. We have found that there have been an increase in organisations seeking to collaborate with us as news of our new inclusive approach has been broadcast. We have fully embedded our relationships with Readipop and Culture Mix, two large cultural organisations that share the same values and aims as us in working with young people. We have worked closely with both partners this year, both delivering alongside them as well as commissioning them to deliver on our behalf. New partners include: Aspire2 (a local charity that aims for all children in all areas of Reading to have an equal opportunity to access enrichment activities), Bradfield College (independent school in Bradfield), Norden Farm (centre for the arts in Maidenhead) and Brighter Futures for Children (delivering children’s social care, early help and prevention and educational services in Reading). We continue to work in partnership with Berkshire Youth most notably in running bi-monthly youth music nights for young people to have a safe space to share and practice their singing/song-writing/playing and performing. We continue to provide tailored music activities with Berkshire Vision to ensure appropriate activities for their young people.

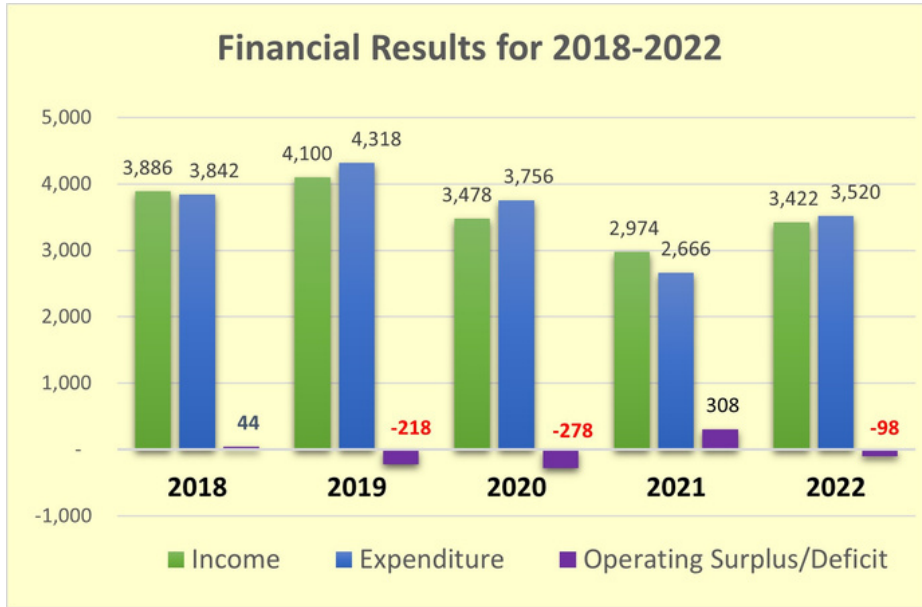




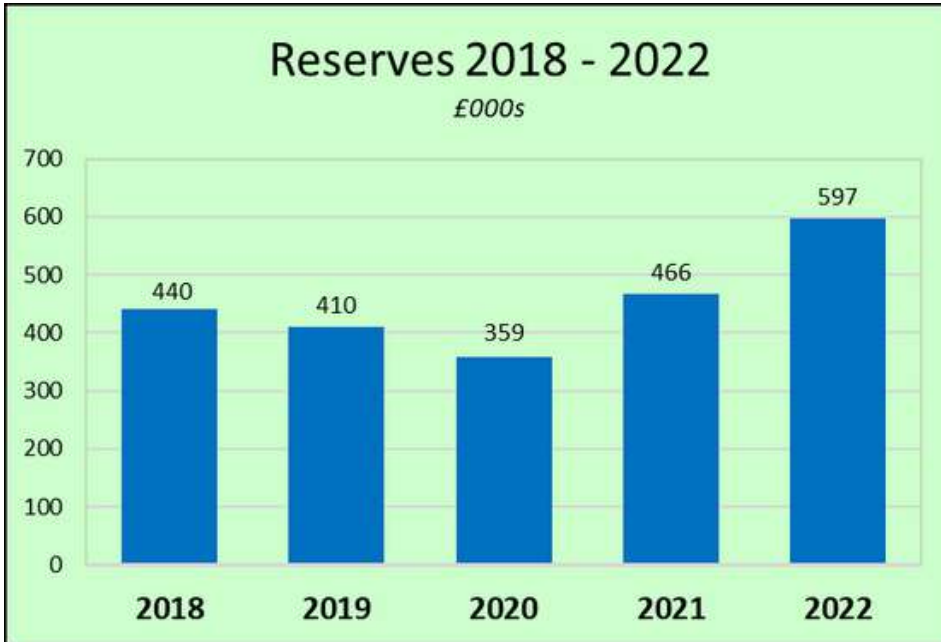
**Annual Report 2021-22**

**Financial Results for 2018-2022**

\*£000's



**Reserves 2018 – 2022**



## Annual Report 2021-22

### Income and Expenditure

Year	Income £000's	Expenditure £000's	Operating Surplus/Deficit £000's
2018	£3,886	£3,842	£44
2019	£4,100	£4,318	-£218
2020	£3,478	£3,756	-£278
2021	£2,974	£2,666	£308
2022	£3,422	£3,520	-£98

### Financial Summary

- We finished 2022 with an operational deficit of £98k, a significant reduction in the deficits recorded in 2019 and 2020.
- The operational surplus in 2021 is largely related to the significant financial support we received during the pandemic, for example, through the Cultural Recovery Fund.
- Our 2022 income recovered £3,422k, returning to a similar level recorded in 2020 (£3,478K), as our full offer and operations returned post-pandemic.
- We reversed the trend of diminishing reserves in 2018-2020, to the strongest position in recent years at the close of 2022, with reserves of £597k.