

TRUSTEE'S REPORT – Financial Year Ended 30.03.23

FOR AGM OCT 26th 2023

Presentation of the annual report

This is the 35th annual report of The Petherton Arts Trust which summarises the events, activities, challenges, successes and opportunities that have featured during the year 2022/23.

My thanks first go to the perseverance and professionalism of the staff, who unfailingly contend with the multiple challenges that face our organisation on a daily basis. Additionally, the support received from other Trustees, and the continued commitment from the many volunteers who make this organisation special.

Fabric of the David Hall Building

During this period we have had no major issues with the fabric of the building. The work completed to secure the roof over the 2022 / 23 financial year has provided us with a dry building with no major issues to resolve. However, as the drying of the walls has taken place there are significant areas of internal plaster that will now need replacing, probably with lime mortar and taking a considerable time to dry and then repaint with breathable paint. A suitable time will be needed when the activities are reduced, and this may not be possible until the summer of 2024.

Internally, we still struggle for internal space for suitable storage and heavy use areas now need to be refreshed, most notably the bar / box office/ bar store area. The floor in the bar store suffered badly during the water ingress period and will need replacement and general upgrading.

Funds and a suitable time period will need to be identified by a task group for these significant maintenance issues

Activities and Entertainments

This year that seen the development of our programme areas to include some new and emerging directions.

Theatre work has included more shows (some with the support of Take Art! - a local partnership). While audiences have been generally low (especially for our 'family / Children's' work), we still believe it is an important part of our offer, and we have continued into 2023/24 as we hope for new audience development.

This also happened with the introduction of a successful Wednesday 'Classical coffee mornings, now regularly bringing in 60 - 90 audience numbers. This works as a partnership with Trio Paradis, a regional professional classical trio, partly arts council funded.

Our spoken word contribution has moved forward with Fresh Fiction / Short - story writers from the region, writing to a theme and presenting regular readings and now forming partnerships with Ilminster Literary Festival.

We have held author talks in partnership with the library service and writing workshops, choirs, dance (junior and adult), jewellery and other crafts have also been available through our community programme.

The following events took place in the period April 2022 to March 2023

Friday 8 April - Rachael McShane and The Cartographers (Music)
Saturday 9 April - Elvis McGonagall (Poetry)
Friday 22 April - Peter Knight's Gigspanner Big Band (Music)
Saturday 23 April - Choice Grenfell - a tribute to Joyce Grenfell (Theatre)
Saturday 30 April - India Electric Co. (Music)
Friday 6 May - Music Quiz (Fundraiser)
Saturday 7 May - Ben Poole (Music)
Saturday 14 May - FLOOK (Music)
Saturday 21 May - Daphne's Flight (Music)
Saturday 28 May - Oyster Band (Music)
Sunday 29 May - " " "
Wednesday 1 June - Whispering Willows (Theatre)
Saturday 4 June - Wor (Music)
Saturday 11 June - Reg Meuross (Music)
Saturday 18 June - Petherton Folkfest
Friday 1 July - The Leylines (Music)
Saturday 2 July - Noche Flamenca (Music)
Wednesday 6 July - Vanity Fair (Theatre)
Friday 15 July - Vent Du Nord (Music)
Wednesday 10 August - Trio Paradis (Cafe Concert)
Wednesday 24 August - Trio Paradis (Cafe Concert)
Saturday 3 September - Gaz Brookfield (Music)
Wednesday 7 September - Trio Paradis (Cafe Concert)
Saturday 10 September - Table Top Sale (Fundraiser)
Sunday 11 September - Fresh Fiction (Storytelling)
Saturday 17 September - Tim Edey (Music and Workshop)
Sunday 18 September - Crystal and Tibetan Singing Bowl (Relaxation)
Saturday 24 September - Mad Dog Mcrea (Music)
Wednesday 5 October - Trio Paradis (Cafe Concert)
Friday 7 October - Dallahan (Music)
Saturday 15 October - Chris While and Julie Matthews (Music)
Friday 21 October - Quiz Night (Fundraiser)
Saturday 22 October - For the love of it (Poetry)
Sunday 23 October - Fresh Fiction (Storytelling)
Tuesday 25 October - The Lost Stories (Storytelling)
Saturday 29 October - Tom Robinson (Music)
Wednesday 2 November - Trio Paradis (Cafe Concert)
Saturday 5 November - Craft Fayre (Fundraiser)
Saturday 5. November - Calan (Music)
Sunday 13 November - Fresh Fiction (Storytelling)
Friday 18 November - Talisk (Music)
Thursday 24 November - Skerryvore (Co Promotion - Octagon Theatre)
Saturday 26 November - Tom Moore and Archie Moss (Music)
Saturday 3 December - Trials of Cato (Music)
Wednesday 7 December - Trio Paradis (Cafe Concert)
Friday 9 December - St. Agnes Fountain (Music)
Saturday 10 December - " "
Sunday 11 December - Fresh Fiction (Storytelling)
Thursday 15 December - Stanchester Quire (Concert)
Saturday 17 December - Black Water County (Music)
Saturday 31 December - New Year's Eve Ceilidh (Party)

Thursday 12 January - Paul Jones and Paul Kelly (Music)
Saturday 21 January - Ranagri (Music)
Thursday 26 January - Godot is a Woman (Theatre)
Friday 27 January - Phil Beer (Music)
Wednesday 1 February - Trio Paradis (Cafe Concert)
Saturday 4 February - Moscow Drug Club (Music)
Saturday 11 February - Martin Harley (Music)
Thursday 16 February - Sharon Shannon (Music)
Saturday 18 February - Ernie's Journey (Theatre)
Sunday 19 February - Fresh Fiction (Storytelling)
Saturday 25 February - Chris Newman & Maire Ni Chatashaigh (Music)
Wednesday 1 March - Trio Paradis (Cafe Concert)
Saturday 4 March - Music Quiz (Fundraiser)
Friday 10 March - Cocktails and Laughter (Theatre)
Saturday 11 March - Roving Crows (Music)
Saturday 18 March - Gilmore and Roberts (Music)
Sunday 19 March - Crystal and Tibetan Singing Bowl (Relaxation)
Friday 24 March - Ninebarrow (Music)
Saturday 25 March - Budapest Cafe Orchestra (Music)

It was pleasing to see that after the disruption of Covid and the problems caused by the economic situation, our numbers increased throughout the year and are now running at about 85% of where we were pre-Covid.

In addition to the above events the Petherton Picture Show, mostly twice monthly, was able to show films throughout this period and their numbers have also held up well.

We are also pleased to say that the Acoustic Performances returned to their normal monthly slot and are doing really well.

We end this period in a much stronger position than when we started it - and thanks to the magnificent support of agents, artists and volunteers - the future is looking extremely positive.

Community Links

Our regular coffee mornings continue with a large following and supported by a strong volunteer team headed by led by the Hartley's. The cakes that appear by magic bring in an appreciative clientele.

Music has become a regular feature at these events and our thanks is given to these performers.

This period saw the introduction of a short-term Community Development and Liaison post, funded through Somerset Community Fund. The post covered two financial periods and has been successful in identifying some short-term developments and well as highlighting a direction of travel in this area of development. We work with a local restaurant who provide discount for early eaters prior to our shows. A local estate agent now provides our information in their welcome pack to new village residents, alongside some complimentary tickets.

With some local historians we worked towards September 2023 for the 160yr commemoration of the buildings first service.

N & D news continued to act as a ticket agency and a link to the village, and we thank them for their support.

The Trust is now running a David Hall Stage at a local Green Scythe fair in a nearby village which brings in additional income and provides the opportunity to reach new audiences.

Financial Review

2022/23 - The aftereffects of the COVID pandemic were still impacting activities at the beginning of the year, particularly audience numbers. As confidence began to rise the sudden large energy costs occurred. This had a double effect, the increases in audience numbers slowed to the extent that we are still not back to pre-pandemic numbers, and the overhead cost related to energy increased dramatically. Current inflation rates mean that the trustees regularly monitor our charges.

Overall, the income from activities and some small grants showed a modest surplus of £8,391 at the end of year, reassuring after two very bumpy years. However, this has not led to complacency and trustees are ever mindful of opportunity to increase use of the hall.

With the appointment of a new Finance officer, we have been able to investigate and use considerably more of the functionality in Xero, our accounts system. As a result, and for the first time have been able to enter reasonably realistic budget for 2023/24 on the system, against which we can measure income and expenditure.

Yearend summary: generated Income of £118,682. Cost of Sales £70,939. This leaves a gross profit of £47,743. Operating Expenses of £60,418 are applied together with Grant and Donation monies of £21,067 the year ended with a Surplus of £8,391 leaving reserves of £39,647).

We hold a Government backed Bounce Back Loan of £29,938 in case of need. This remains in a separate account and repayment has commenced.

Plans for the Future

Measuring against the plans set in the previous annual report I can report some success in most areas.

In the 22/23 report we said:

We will seek to

- Broaden our offering further to attract new audiences with a small classical series and additional spoken word events.

COMPLETED

- Increase our secondary income from hiring and other activities.

SOME INCREASE

- Seek further ways to control our energy costs and so reduce our carbon footprint.

IMPROVED CONTRACTS WITH SUPPLIERS OBTAINED

- Seek funding opportunities to enable improvements and wider cultural opportunities to take place.

NOT ACHIEVED

While aiming to maintain the high quality of performers and presentations that we currently enjoy, we do need to broaden our reach, but this comes at a significant financial risk. We hope that the new funding arrangements with the reformed local authority will provide some opportunity for funding support to allow small and progressive centres like The

Petherton Arts Trust to obtain financial support for these developments and bring in wider culture opportunities.

Impacts & Issues - Key challenges

These challenges have not changed significantly from 22/23, other than the pandemic effects are slowly reducing, though nationally centres are reporting a still present decline of around 30% in ticket sales.

I am pleased to report this, for us has not been so severe, though is still an issue
2023 / 2004

1. Continue to see new audience and secure funding and partnerships to enable this to take place.
2. Support our volunteers effectively.
3. Streamline our Marketing and communications by:
 - updating marketing distribution methods and lists
 - identifying media systems to promote our delivery effectively
4. Maintain the physical infrastructure of the building

Christopher Latham
Chair