



www.shorehamwordfest.com

Annual Report 2020

2020 was a year where all plans were set aside and normal activities ceased as we all faced the impact of a global pandemic.

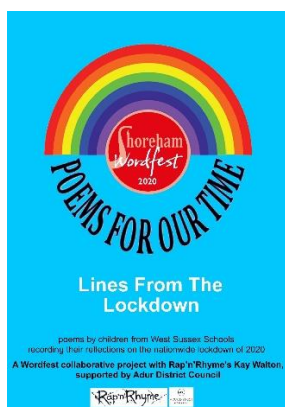
We were planning for our 10th annual Shoreham Wordfest, with celebratory events planned to take place throughout the year. When it became clear that the March lockdown would continue for the foreseeable future, the first event to be cancelled was the annual Celebrating Shakespeare festival due to take place in April, followed by the cancellation of a special Wordfest event in May with author Alexander McCall Smith. By June we finally accepted that the annual autumn festival would also have to be cancelled, but a number of other successful projects continued throughout the year by adapting to the circumstances, and new opportunities arose.



Poetry and Short Story Competition

The Wordfest Poetry team decided to press ahead with the 10th anniversary poetry and short story competition, which was launched in April with a closing date of August. The competition was open to Sussex residents who were invited to submit 10 line poems or 10 word short stories.

We were delighted by the response with 171 poems and 271 short stories submitted. The judges were poet John McCullough and fiction writer Catherine Smith. The final selection of poetry entries was compiled into a book published by Shoreham Wordfest and the prizes were awarded in a live ceremony at the beginning of August.

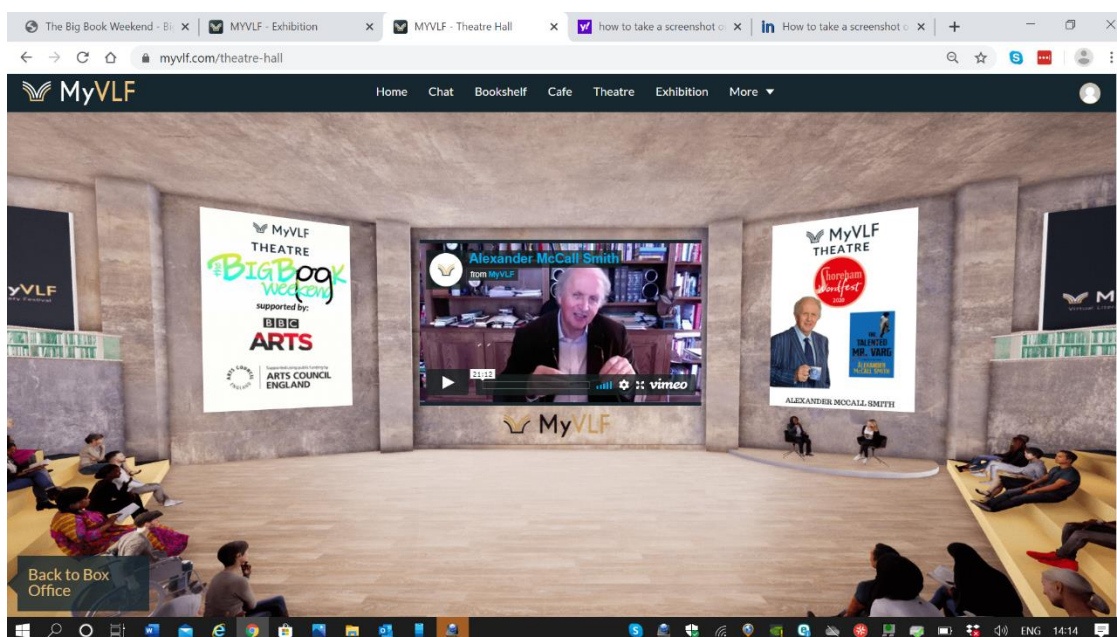


Children's Poetry: Lines from the Lockdown

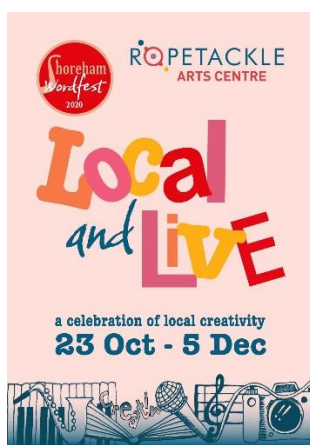
The Schools and Community Team were planning school-based poetry workshops, in partnership with Kay Walton of Rap'n'Rhyme which would lead to school performances and a competition to select and publish the best submissions from primary schools in Adur. Due to school closures the direct workshops could not go ahead but the team designed worksheets and recorded performances which were put on the Wordfest website to be used as a home learning resource, promoted by the local schools.

Again, we were delighted by the response with 114 poems submitted by children from 18 different schools, including some from the wider West Sussex catchment. The team decided to include all the submissions under the title of Poems for Our Time: Lines from the Lockdown. The book was launched in October with a live, socially distanced celebration event for children and families. It serves as a historical record of the impact of the pandemic on children and their responses. Copies have been sent to the British Library and the County records office.

The Big Book Weekend



As we started to adapt to working from home and using technology, new opportunities arose including the launch in May of The Big Book Weekend, an on-line literary festival, by authors Kit de Waal and Molly Flatt. Local Literary festivals were invited to submit proposals for book events and author talks. Alexander McCall Smith agreed to take part with Shoreham Wordfest and we eventually appeared as the second event in the weekend programme, with over 800 people watching the 20 minute talk and reading, which greatly increased our profile amongst national literary festivals. The BBW enterprise showed that people were keen to take part in virtual events and that with good design and funding this could be a satisfactory experience, extending the audience numbers considerably beyond the capacity of normal live event.



Local and Live Festival

By the summer months the Covid restrictions were gradually easing and live indoor events could take place from September onwards, with social distancing and various preventative measures. Working in partnership with Ropetackle Arts Centre, we bid for an Arts Council grant to support the return to live performances. We successfully applied for just under £15,000 to support the cost of putting on events with restricted audience numbers and to fund the purchase of cameras and other technology to support recording and live streaming events to a wider audience.

The aim was to feature local performers and speakers with a mix of spoken word, drama and live music. This would give paid opportunities for the performers, technicians and front of house staff, many of whom had not worked since the lockdown in March, and also an income stream for the Ropetackle Arts Centre. It would be an opportunity to test and build audience confidence in returning to events, and a chance for training and developing in a recording and live-streaming.

The programme of 21 events was planned to start in October and end in December. The publicity was launched with an eye-catching design by local artist Judith Berrill. The cameras and equipment were researched and the system designed by our web-manager Akhil Padmajan. The recording system was tested at the two poetry celebration events in early October, and the recordings were put onto the website, along with an on-line shop to sell the poetry books.

The live events started on 23 October and it was clear there was an appetite for coming to live events, even though the seating was restricted to 60 in the auditorium designed to take 220 at full capacity. We held 8 events up to 30 October when it was clear that we were entering another national lockdown for November.

A further two events were held in early December, but the programme was then paused for the lockdown throughout the early months of 2021. By that point we had established that people would want to come back to events as soon as it was safe to do so, had guaranteed work for performers and technicians and had not only established a recording system but had also run our first live stream. This would be the basis for some more lockdown events in 2021.

Concluding remarks

2020 was a year unlike any other, but despite the difficulties faced by everyone through Covid 19, it was clear that cultural activities remained important and that we could respond creatively and innovatively, which would serve us well in the future, building resilience as an organisation.

Rosalind Turner

Programme Director

Shoreham Wordfest

www.shorehamwordfest.com



Noise Next Door



Christmas Carol



Dr John Froude



Camera set up

Shoreham Wordfest
Income and Expenditure Account for
The Year Ending 31 December 2020

General Unrestricted Funds

Balance at 1 January 2020	16097	
Income	3926	
Expenditure	<u>(3840)</u>	
Balance at 31 December 2020		16183

Restricted Funds

Adur District Council - Cultural Projects

Balance at 1 January 2020	10000	
Expenditure	<u>(3425)</u>	
Balance at 31 December 2020		6575

Arts Council - Local and Live

Grant received	13042	
Expenditure	<u>(8882)</u>	
Balance at 31 December 2020		4160

Total Funds at 31 December 2020		<u>26918</u>
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Represented by

Bank Balance 31 December 2020	27382	
Less Creditors	<u>(464)</u>	

Total Funds at 31 December 2020		<u>26918</u>
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