



AGM 2021



# Trustees Report December 2021



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# Message from the Chair of Trustees



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Dear Member

The Winter Gardens Trust held its first AGM six years ago in July 2015 and at that meeting, the Board of Trustees committed to issuing an annual report on activity to members. Because of the Pandemic, we were unable to meet last year and the lingering effects of Coronavirus has necessitated a deferral of the AGM until December 2021. One of the proposals at the AGM will be to seek permission to hold a virtual AGM in the event of another national emergency such as the one we faced during the pandemic. This will help us stay connected and allow us to complete necessary paperwork like returns to the Charity Commission.

Naturally, the Pandemic has affected all areas of our operation as it has so many other charities and community groups and with the venue being closed for the whole of the lockdown period between March 2020 and May 2021 there hasn't been much to report. That said, we have been fortunate that our costs are relatively low and because of this, we've come out of a year of no activity with our resources intact and raring to get going again.

At the end of 2019 and into the very beginning of 2020, we did manage to get some activity in, most notably our Christmas Tree Festival in November 2019 and the 2020 Open Day, the latter of which had high attendance despite the trouble brewing on the horizon. Hopefully the coming year will see these events back in our calendar and working closely with the venue again.

We also have some hellos and goodbyes within the Trust's Board and staff. Firstly we welcome Peter Evans who replaces Michael Williams as the BECL ex officio Trustee. Peter comes to us from his role as Commercial Director at the Birmingham Hippodrome and has over 30 years' experience in running large commercial businesses ranging from regional and West End theatres to multi-functional venues. Appropriately, Peter's previous roles include Trustee of Manchester Jazz Festival and The Empire Theatre, Sunderland. We look forward to working closely with Peter who is already engaging with us to look at events for the coming year.

We also sadly said goodbye to David Gore, our marketing and communications officer who has stepped down from his role to focus on other work. I know David has been a huge support to us over the last few years and many of you will know him as the author of our email updates and membership information. We're currently looking at ways to get back on track with the updates and to link these into our website, so stay tuned but don't be too worried if it takes a couple of months into the new year to sort.

The Trust continues to support BECL where it can, but the Board recently met to look at how we can increase the amounts we raise and how we help the venue with its ambitious programme of improvements. As you will no doubt be aware, the Trust regularly supports Blackpool Council and BECL in bids to funders through demonstrating the public value of the venue and how we support greater public access. We will be asking you, our members to consider some proposals for how we manage this in future as part of the AGM. These proposals are set out in the next section of this report (Our Funds).

In closing I'd like to ask you all to keep your eyes out for the imminent changes coming to the Church Street side of the Winter Gardens. You may or may not have read in the local press that Historic England have awarded significant funding to replace the modern shopfronts under Empress Buildings with beautiful Victorian style hardwood frontages and to replace the modern tiling around the main doors with copies of the original faience panels

I'd like to close by yet again thanking you all for all your support over the last year, whether it is simply by subscribing and being a friend or by being one of our keen volunteers, helping out at events and with fundraising. I would also like to thank the staff at the Winter Gardens, particularly the remarkable team of managers who work so hard to support us and for whom it seems that nothing is too much trouble.

I look forward to seeing you all on the **16<sup>th</sup> December**

David Owen  
Chair of the Board of Trustees  
The Winter Gardens Trust



# Our Funds



**Our funds and what we do with them is important, and whilst it's not all about the money, we still need to bring funds in to deliver and support activities within the Winter Gardens.**

Our income and expenditure report for the financial years 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 are given below and our Secretary will run through this and answer any questions at the AGM. In the interests of transparency, we'll also have a full transaction list available on the evening for anyone who would like to see the accounts in item by item detail!

## Winter Gardens Trust Income/Expenditure 2019/20

	In	Out
Carried Forward from 2018/19	<b>£ 22,167.46</b>	

Admin/Website		-£ 589.46
Stationery		-£ 401.26
Stamps		-£ 16.80
Events	£ 4,755.50	-£ 3,645.86
Merchandise	£ 442.37	-£ 1,033.11
Sponsorship		-£ 200.00
Membership	£ 914.84	
Acquisitions		
Equipment		
Projects		
Donations	£ 2,057.79	-£12,000.00
Debtors		

### Year Totals

<b>£ 30,337.96</b>	<b>-£17,886.49</b>
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### Available Balance

<b>£ 12,451.47</b>
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## Winter Gardens Trust Income/Expenditure 2020/21

	In	Out
Carried Forward from 2019/20	<b>£ 12,451.47</b>	

Admin/Website		-£ 423.97
Stationery		-£ 82.00
Stamps		-£ 33.06
Events		-£ 175.00
Merchandise	£ 133.76	
Sponsorship		
Membership	£ 10.00	
Acquisitions		
Equipment		
Donations		
Debtors		

<b>Year Totals</b>	<b>£ 12,595.23</b>	<b>-£ 714.03</b>
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<b>Available Balance</b>	<b>£ 11,881.20</b>
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As indicated in the message from the Chair of Trustees, there has been much discussion of how we more effectively transfer surplus funds to projects within the Winter Gardens. There are two factors to consider; the first is how much is offered and the second is what it will be spent on and how that spend is monitored.

In terms of the first, the Board proposes that at the end of every financial year, any surplus funding will be divided into two. 20% will be retained for reserves and the remaining 80% will be handed over to BECL.

In terms of the second, the Board is proposing that the Trust engage on a focused five year campaign to raise the necessary funding to re-paint the Empress Ballroom ceiling which has been left looking patchy after its recent repair and strengthening.

These proposals will be put to the membership and a vote on the proposals will be tabled in the AGM agenda. The Board would welcome any views from members on this subject.

# Our Membership



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**Our membership is the most important part of who we are. Without their support our work would be much more difficult and whilst your subscription money is important, the involvement of our members is even more critical.**

At the beginning of lockdown in March 2020 the Winter Gardens Trust had 326 fully paid up members. Our revenue from membership has fallen in real terms over the past three years. Partly this is due to our two year membership deal in 2018 in support of the Big 140 fundraising programme and of course in part to the freezing of membership fees during the pandemic.

This means that in essence, all memberships are now up for renewal and we will be launching a membership drive at the AGM where members will be able to renew in person. Our online system will be re-opened for memberships and we will be looking to ensure that the facility for renewals and new members is available at all of our events.

## Our Events

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**Our events are important to us because they offer a way to raise money as well as an opportunity to get together as a group to celebrate what's special about the Winter Gardens. Here are some highlights.**

Our last two events (both in the financial year 2019/20) were our **Christmas Tree Festival** (Nov 2019) and the Winter Gardens Open Day (Feb 2020). Both were slightly lower key than usual in terms of income but they still represented two of our largest events both in terms of income streams and public participation. The Christmas Tree Festival yielded an income of £2470.00 and the Open day yielded a total income of £1000, both figures down from 2018/19 but still very welcome.

# Our Sponsorships & Acquisitions



**The way we support others in bringing the past to life is also important to us and we're constantly looking to develop new volunteers as well as rewarding our stalwart regulars.**

## Sponsorship

We have only given one grant since the last AGM which was to support training for colleagues responsible for organising the Winter Gardens Film Festival. The £200 grant allowed access to a British Film Institute (BFI) training course on effective and inclusive programming

## Acquisitions

There were no acquisitions over the two financial years covered by this report (2019/20 & 2020/21).

## Our Programme 2021/22

**Our programme of events is changing all the time and the listings below don't include the many shows and non – trust events held at the Winter Gardens every year.**

We're still working on the programme of events for the coming year but we're hoping to see a comeback for the Annual Dinner (which we may work around a Platinum Jubilee theme), Burns Night and coffee mornings alongside the Open Day and a relaunched Christmas event.

For updated details on the Winter Gardens Programme, go to our website at <http://www.wintergardenstrust.org.uk>. If you're wondering what to do over the coming months, why not look at the huge range of events programmed for the Winter Gardens this Winter online at:

<http://www.wintergardensblackpool.co.uk>



# Our Constitution & Board



**Our constitution was written and ratified when the Trust became a Charity in 2015, but like all such documents, it requires occasional amendments to keep up with the times! Our Board will also occasionally change too as people retire or go on to bigger and better things and this year we'd like to make a special addition.**

**Constitution** - At the 2021 AGM we will be proposing an amendment to our constitution that specifically allows us to hold statutory meetings like the AGM online in circumstances like those we've recently seen with the Coronavirus pandemic.

The proposal will require a simple addition to the constitution under section 11 which sets out the rules for meetings. Under Section 11.2 it is proposed that an additional clause will be inserted at 11.2 (j). The working will be as follows:

- (j) In extraordinary circumstances, the Board of Trustees may elect to call an online or virtual AGM. This decision must be circulated with any papers for the AGM clearly setting out the reasons for moving to an online meeting.

**Board** – We recognise how passionate staff working at the Winter Gardens are about the venue and history but we should remember that they also have a vested interest in its future. In recognition of this, the Board would like to co-opt a member of staff from the Winter Gardens team to the Board. This staff member will not be a Trustee but will be a part of decisions the Board makes.

The nominee will be selected by staff ballot so in effect, the staff will vote for the person they wish to be represented by. This does not require a change to the constitution but the Board would like members support in this move.

The Board would welcome any views from members on this subject in advance of, or at the meeting.



THE  
WINTER GARDENS TRUST

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