



AGM 2022



Trustees Report for 2021/22



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Message from the Chair of Trustees



Dear Member

The Winter Gardens Trust held its first AGM seven years ago in July 2015 and at that meeting, the Board of Trustees committed to issuing an annual report on activity to members. Despite the tail end of the pandemic and the concerns of many of our members, we were able to meet in December last year and along with the business of the AGM we enjoyed a glass of wine and a mince pie or two. This made it all seem very much more social, so we decided to do the same again this year and hope we will see many more of you in attendance.

I would like to begin by expressing my own sadness and that of the Board over the loss of one of our founding Trustees, Ted Lightbown who passed away in February of this year. It's difficult to express how important Ted was to Blackpool both as a serious local historian and as an ambassador for Blackpool and its past. Ted was one of the driving forces behind the formation of the Trust and continued to serve as a Trustee up to the time of his passing. One could not hope for a more generous, kind, and loyal friend. He will be terribly missed by everyone who knew him. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his wife Ann and all of Ted's family.

This year has been rather busier than the two I covered in the last Trustees Report and I'm pleased to say that with the hard work of Trustees and volunteers, our membership is now moving towards pre-pandemic levels. Our events programme has also picked up and our more regular coffee morning are attracting a significant following, so much so that we're now looking at hosting one every month.

To support this return to normal and a busier events programme, we have commissioned a new website which will help all of us find out what's happening and when. It will also have a built in membership system so you can join and pay online in one simple process.

We have also been working closely with BECL to look at projects for future funding. You'll remember at our last meeting we agreed that as an organisation, we'd be focusing on helping to re decorate the Empress Ballroom and its magnificent ceiling but for various reasons, this wasn't possible, so we're proposing to switch our focus to the three remaining chandeliers in the Empress Ballroom as the focus for the next two years so we can get them complete and help relieve any pressure on bigger restoration projects further down the line.

To support these, we've also been looking at new ways of raising funds to ensure we can continue to support these projects into the future. We recognise that with the national cost of living crisis that this will be very challenging but we can only hope that this will ease as we move forward into future years. One of the areas we have been looking at is our subscription fee. There has been much discussion about whether it might be time to increase this as it has stayed the same since the membership scheme began in 2014. Another option is to first try a two tier approach to membership so that members can voluntarily opt for a larger subscription fee for increased benefits. Because this is an important decision, we are asking all members to vote on this via email or postal correspondence and a form will be attached which outlines the proposals and the cost of each option. Please do respond to this as it's important we get the widest possible representation.

In our last Trustees Report I also drew your attention to the upcoming changes to the Church Street façade, changes which are now largely complete with the exception of one or two specific areas. The work that's been done here has improved this side of the building and enhanced St John's Square immeasurably.

All of this building work is also linked to a programme of creative activity intended to bring new life to the Town centre by providing different reason to visit and use its facilities. Here at the Winter Gardens we've had a series of local craft and art markets as well as summer activities for young people and on the 3rd December we'll be having another of these markets with the addition of promenade theatre, entertainment and a giant interactive snow globe in which you can have your picture taken! The date is before that of our AGM, but I know you'll be reading this before then, so we hope to see you there on the day!

I would 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 **7th December**

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



2019 AGM

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 money in to deliver and support activities within the Winter Gardens.

Our income and expenditure report for the financial year 2021/2022 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 2021/22

	In	Out
Carried Forward from 2020/21	£ 10,620.63	
Admin/Website	£ -	-£ 318.18
Stationery	£ -	£ -
Stamps	£ -	-£ 165.67
Events	£ 287.00	-£ 209.88
Merchandise	£ 2,100.58	£ -
Sponsorship	£ -	£ -
Membership	£ 377.94	-£ 557.33
Acquisitions		-£ 2,688.00
Equipment		-£ 2,500.00
Donations	£ 10,498.59	
Year Totals	£ 23,884.74	-£6,439.06
Available Balance	£ 17,445.68	

At the **last AGM** we presented proposals for how we more actively support projects within the Winter Gardens and it was decided to dedicate a proportion of our surplus income to do this.

In the subsequent year and with some discussion with BECL we have decided to modify this slightly in response to changing circumstances. For instance, the Ballroom ceiling will not be ready for painting in the next eighteen months so we have agreed to channel available funding to complete the restoration of the Empress Ballroom chandeliers of which three remain unrestored. This requires a commitment to supply C£30k over the next 2-3 years. Once these have been completed, the Board will agree new priorities for funding with BECL and present them at the first available AGM.

As outlined in the Chairman's message, the Trust Board has been looking at ways of improving fundraising and a number of suggestions were examined including

- Reviewing Membership Subscription Fees
- Reviewing the events programme
- Implementing Gift Aid
- Creating a Legacy Scheme
- Expanding our Merchandise

The first two will be dealt with in the appropriate sections of this report but the proposals for the remaining three are as follows

Implementing Gift Aid – As many of you will be aware, we have featured the gift aid tick box on our membership forms for the past five years but to date we haven't made a claim. This is largely due to the fact that the bulk of our members are retired and do not pay tax on their income which makes them ineligible for allocating gift aid reducing the amount the Trust can claim. We're proposing that this now be collected (we can backdate claims for three years) and that we ensure it is collected yearly in future.

Creating a legacy Scheme – Many charities have a legacy scheme that encourages money to be left to them as legacies. This can be very complex and it's not always a popular route for funding, but evidence suggests that where there is a strong connection to a building, place or organisation, it can yield occasional boosts to revenue. It has been agreed that this needs to be approached carefully and the Board will aim to circulate more information in the next few months.

Expanding our Merchandise – Many of you will be familiar with the Trust's cards and books but given that these have been around for a while, it was decided that this offer needed to be refreshed. As a result, we have now produced an enamel badge featuring the Winter Gardens Trust Lion, a range of new cards and a tea towel. There are plans to look at a mug or mugs and potentially another tea towel.

Another issue raised was how we make sure Trust merchandise is more available on a day to day basis. Aunty Social have agreed to retail our merchandise through their new Topping Street shop and the Board are working on a retail arrangement with BECL so merchandise can be bought at the Mazzei sales point.



Images of some of our new greetings cards

Our Membership



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.

Our membership is back up again post pandemic but we're not quite there yet. To make joining or re-subscribing to the Winter Gardens Trust easier we will be launching a new website with online membership and payment functions. This should be ready to go by the AGM so we're hoping to have further updates there.

As part of looking at how to improve fundraising the Board have discussed the potential to either up the subscription fee or create a second tier of membership with enhanced benefits. On balance and given the current cost of living crisis it was decided to keep our standard subscription fee the same and to add an enhanced tier of membership.

This new category of membership at £30.00 will feature significantly enhanced membership benefits potentially including a welcome pack of merchandise, a range of discounts and priority consideration for complimentary and/or discounted ticketing. We're still working on the detail but hope to announce the package at the AGM.

The Trustees would also like to ask members to help us grow. Do you know someone who was a member but isn't anymore? Do you know others who might be interested and who you could encourage to join? What about a year's subscription as a Christmas present? We'd be only too happy to provide cards in a lovely Christmas card with envelope for you to give friends and family.

Our Events

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.

With 2021/22 being the year that the Trust effectively came out of lockdown, it was another quiet year, although the Trust did establish a new tradition for a Christmas AGM with wine and mince pies, so it was good to see 2021 out with a bit of festive cheer!

We do have a lot more to look forward to in 2022/23, with an extensive programme of coffee mornings exploring various aspects of the Winter Gardens history and architecture and some unusual tours. Alongside this a programme of creative markets and summer activity for families will hopefully help us build new events and a more exciting programme.

As part of our focus on improved fundraising it has been suggested that we look at bigger ticket signature events and one of the suggestions is to host something like an annual Winter Gardens Carnival Ball,. Something we'll develop if you agree.



A Costume Ball of the early 1930's in the Empress Ballroom

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 and contribute to partnership costs. We also sometimes acquire equipment or items for our collection.

Sponsorship

There were no sponsorships offered over the financial year covered by this report (2021/22).

Acquisitions

The Trust made its final payment of £2688.00 for the Winter Gardens Book which we commissioned to be reprinted in 2014. We thank the Council for its patience and its kindness in allowing the reprint and the reassignment of the copyright to the Trust.

Our Programme 2022/23

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 Film Festival, Annual Dinner, St Georges Day afternoon tea and an extensive programme coffee mornings alongside future open days and hopefully a signature event for 2023.

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 – There are no proposed changes to the constitution for consideration at this AGM.

Board – All current elected Trustees have indicated their willingness to re-stand as trustees so unless other nominations are received they will all continue to serve until the next AGM. The loss of Ted Lightbown has created a vacancy for an elected trustee so do consider standing if you have any skills or experience you feel the Trust might benefit from. The forms for nomination with the explanatory rules are all issued to members with the AGM pack of which this is one document of four in total.

