



AGM 2024



Trustees Report for 2024

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# Message from the Chair of Trustees



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Dear Member

The Winter Gardens Trust held its first AGM eight years ago in July 2015 and at that meeting, the Board of Trustees committed to issuing an annual report on activity to members. This is our fourth year of meeting in the lead up to the festive season and it gives me enormous pleasure to again extend an invitation to join us on the evening of Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December for a glass of wine and a mince pie.

One piece of good news for 2024 is that we have now met our commitment for funding the restoration of the Empress Ballroom Chandeliers which are now all complete and as you will have seen over the year, look stunning. As usual, we extend our thanks to the Winter Gardens team handling this work, which has been such a success.

In addition, in September, the Trustees voted to support the Blackpool Music Service with a small grant of £2000 per year for three years to make their Winter Gardens fundraising event more sustainable. Having recently lost other funding, we felt that this was a cause that our membership would support, particularly given the connection of the organisation to the Winter Gardens. Our thanks to Michael Williams for bringing this to us and making us aware of the challenges faced by the Blackpool Music Service and providing us with an opportunity to help young people in their musical journey. Our thanks also for the opportunity to strengthen the connection of young people to the Winter Gardens for the future.

Our coffee mornings go from strength to strength and in June, we replaced our normal event with a trip to Richmond's Georgian Theatre to look at how a charitable trust has restored and operates this remarkable survival of a very early theatre. This followed on from the trip last year to Morecambe Winter Gardens and I understand that these have been so popular, that we're looking at options for next year as well.

Unusually this year, our Christmas Fair event in the Horseshoe will already have happened on November 30<sup>th</sup> when we meet for our AGM. I do hope you'll support us on the day, I know last year many of our members were able to drop in and find some locally made Christmas gifts. Our volunteers will be there selling our Christmas cards and other merchandise so if you know someone who'd appreciate a membership for Christmas, you know where to go!

We would also like to thank one of our Trustees, Pay Hayes, who has retired from the Board after more than ten years of working with the Trust. Pat has played a pivotal role in the development of our work and whilst we're sorry to see her go, we're pleased that she'll continue to help us as a volunteer. Thank you for everything Pat!

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 **4th 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 money in to deliver and support activities within the Winter Gardens.**

Our income and expenditure report for the financial year 2023/2024 is 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 2022/23

	In	Out
Carried Forward from 2018.19	<b>£ 18,772.97</b>	
Admin/Website	£ -	-£ 2,290.40
Stationery	£ -	-£ 17.41
Stamps	£ -	-£ 122.55
Events	£ 7,227.30	-£ 6,082.74
Merchandise	£ 566.53	-£ 79.00
Sponsorship/Grants		-£ 9,000.00
Membership	£ 2,469.49	£ -
Trustee Expenses		-£ 48.10
Acquisitions	£ -	£ -
Equipment		-£ 129.99
Donations	£ 7,246.90	
Debtors	£ -	£ -
<b>Year Totals</b>	<b>£ 36,283.19</b>	<b>-£ 17,770.19</b>
<b>Available Balance</b>	<b>£ 18,513.00</b>	

As discussed at our last AGM, the final settlement of the Chandelier account, the trustees feel we need to take a break from active funding larger projects so we can rebuild the Trust's reserves. As set out in the Chair's message, the Trustees have agreed to support the Blackpool Music Service to the tune of £2000 a year for the current year and the two financial years that follow. This will still allow us to build up funds for a bigger project at some point in the 206/27 financial year.



# 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.**

Membership numbers continue to remain strong with our current membership stands at 271. The monthly social opportunity of the coffee morning has clearly contributed to this with many of our new members joining as a result of them. Membership subs remain a core source of funding, totalling £2469.49 in the 2023/4 financial year.

The Trustees are not recommending any increase to membership fees in the current year. This largely because we want membership to remain affordable and also because rising costs for other activities like the coffee mornings will already have added pressure elsewhere.

As they did last year, 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.**

Income from events in the 2023/24 may look significantly down from last year but this year's total of £1144.66 does not include £1319.88 of income from makers market stalls in Oct and December 2023 paid to us in at the beginning of April 2024, (appearing therefore in next year's accounts and making the actual total 2464.44).

Our trip to Morecambe in May 2023 allowed members of the Winter Gardens Trust to meet volunteers for the Morecambe Winter Gardens Trust to see the ongoing restoration work to our sister venue further up the Lancashire coast. A huge amount has been achieved in the last few years and the venue continues to go from strength to strength both in its restoration and the range of events on offer. We were warmly welcomed and enjoyed not only a tour but afternoon tea provided by the venue. We'd like to thank everyone involved, both the volunteers for the Winter Gardens Trust who organised everything and our counterparts at Morecambe who have worked so hard to bring this remarkable building back from the brink.

The trip to Morecambe Winter Gardens in May (2023) was such a success with members that it was immediately agreed we would look for another trip in 2024. In the end, it was decided to take a trip to Richmond in North Yorkshire to see the remarkable Georgian Theatre. More on this in our next report.

One of the continuing highlights of the 2023/24 year has been the ongoing success of our monthly coffee mornings. With an average of 65-75 at each event, we're hoping this continues to grow and we're always looking for new speakers, so if you know of one, do get in touch! We're immensely grateful to all of those who gave up their time to speak to us and who have made the coffee mornings such a success.

# 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.**

## Sponsorship

Our only grant in 2023/24 was a further payment of £9000 for the repair of the Empress Ballroom Chandeliers. We'll be splitting the cost of these between 2022/23 and 2024/25 with the final payments being made next year. As was explained at our last AGM, once we've completed these payments, the intent is to take a year or two off funding bigger projects to build up a pot of money so that we can start to look for another project in 2026/2027.

## Acquisitions

The Trust bought a second credit card reader this year, but with a built in sim card, meaning it avoids members having to work it through mobile phones. This is simpler than the previous card reader but more expensive at £129.00.

## Our Programme 2024/25



**Our programme of events is changing all the time and our events 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 bring back our annual dinner (we have dates set aside in April), St George's Day afternoon tea and an extensive programme of coffee mornings alongside future open days and hopefully a signature event for 2025.

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!**

**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. We have had one Trustee stand down in the current year and so we would encourage anybody interested in standing to put themselves forward as soon as possible.



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