



Registered Charity 1167590

Annual Report 2023

Presented at the AGM on 4 February 2024

Wychavon Festival of Brass



Registered Charity 1167590

Annual Report and Accounts For the year ending 31 December 2023

President

Cllr Mrs D.Raphael

Trustees

Dr Val Trim (Chair/ Contest Sec)
Mr Mike Pawson (Festival Sec)
Mr Iain Willis (Treasurer)
Mr Simon Dowdeswell (Logistics)
Mr Oliver Wilson (Social Media)
Miss Sarah Timms (Youth)
Mr Dave Larner (retired Dec 31st 2023)

Contact Details: Email secretary@festivalofbrass.co.uk

Chairman's Report

The Wychavon Annual Entertainment held on November 4th 2023 proved to be the most successful yet in terms of the number of competition bands, the quality of the music played and the overall efficiency of the running of the day. The consistency of delivery of the WFB contest remains one of its key attractions to all concerned.

All committee members remained healthy (!) and executed their tasks throughout the day with cool efficiency and great good humour. The care taken in planning the event paid off and there were no major upsets or last-minute problems.

All the adjudicators, assistants, prize givers, percussion suppliers, caterers et al functioned well. All volunteers did well and efficiently once they were familiar with their roles.

Setting up on the Friday before the contest was slower than usual, as was the taking down of the drapes which meant that the site was not vacated until after midnight on contest day. Subsequent discussions with the drape hire company have included the need for a pre-event meeting to fix a clearer timetable of activity on both days to aid efficiency. There were one or two problems with A/V equipment as well and this must be addressed for 2024.

The storage of the property that WFB owns (carpets, banners etc) has been greatly improved by the willingness of TDMS to loan WFB the part use of one of its storage containers. This means that kit can be stored on site and is accessible at any time (with permission from TDMS). To facilitate matters, WFB contributed financially to the laying of a pathway to the container and installation of electric lights inside it.

The introduction of a traders' marquee was especially successful and WFB thanks The Fleece for its continued support in helping to facilitate this success and WFB hopes to build on this in 2024.

The introduction of paid parking went ahead and was largely successful in generating cash (some of which was used to offset some necessary parking expenses). The continuance of the scheme in the future needs more discussion and a full review in the light of the actual experience of running it.

The WFB team is small but effective. Recruitment remains a key issue despite advertisements through social media and by direct appeal to bands and their membership both at the contest and via email and the press. However, such a small team relies on everyone being present to ensure the event functions well. The WFB was again supported by Brass Bands England in the form of Rosie Banham. Our thanks go to her for her excellent performance on both days in helping to set up and then to run one of the sections.

The sudden and unexpected death of (Capt.) Julian Spilsbury a few days before the contest was a sad blow, as he had served as announcer in the Championship Section for many years and was respected and liked by all that knew him.

Some areas that were identified and needed attention in 2023 have been addressed:

1. A rethink of the volunteer recruitment, training and monitoring (ongoing)
2. Consideration of the repositioning of the trade stands (achieved)

3. Consideration of the general layout of the exterior spaces of the contest area to provide better access and parking and more clearly define social areas (achieved)
4. On site storage to alleviate the effort and difficulties attached to trailer storage (the need to unload and repack after the event and for transportation). (achieved)
5. A review of the WFB roles in order to create job specifications for future replacement and/or recruitment to aid an expansion of the WFB team. (ongoing)

Some areas for consideration are 2024:

- Review of car parking arrangements
- Recruitment
- Relationship with BBE
- Fund raising
- Youth work

I thank all our helpers and volunteers who helped at the contest and especially our photographers from the Vale of Evesham Camera Club for their fantastic efforts across a very long day! I would like to extend our warmest thanks to Diana and Rob Raphael for their constancy and affectionate support.

Needless to say, WFB extends its thanks to all of our sponsors that have supported us unstintingly. Special thanks go to the Elmley Foundation without which this contest would not function, and to Nigel Smith of the Fleece.

I would like to thank and compliment the WFB team for all that they do unstintingly throughout the year in preparation for this contest.

Contest Secretary's Report

2023 was indeed a bumper year despite the fact that, close to contest day, the Second Section had to be abandoned. Although four Second Section bands entered, and another three from the Third Section wanted to play at the higher level (making a viable group of 7 in all) three second section bands later withdrew. This meant that the remaining section was unbalanced (3 Section three bands plus 1 Second Section band only). For non-withdrawing bands entry fees were returned after the section was cancelled.

In the light of this, the rules that regulate the staging of sections have been amended to circumvent similar problems occurring in the future.

Several unregistered bands entered the Fourth Section and one of these also entered the Third. In response to what is perceived to be a desire for some bands to contest without being affiliated to the National Registry and the potential this had to disrupt the status quo of the ranking system (i.e. it is not difficult to imagine that a scratch band of retired Championship section players could sweep the board of a Fourth Section contest, much to the dismay of registered Fourth Section bands), WFB has included a plea within its rules which requests that unregistered bands should be community based and of an appropriate level commensurate with the section entered.

Many more bands are using Audio/Visual equipment combined with band choreography and thus require a non-playing person to operate the kit. Again, the rules have been amended to take account of this.

In all the contest attracted 69 bands (before withdrawals) with a potential of 78 performances. Venue restrictions, time constraints and band withdrawals meant that, on the day 64 performances were given.

Val Trim
Chair and Contest Sec

Festival Reports

Stewarding 2022

This year I started the volunteer recruitment earlier than previously, at the beginning of August. I sent out 155 emails to people who had volunteered before and followed this up with a second email towards the end of September including some to potential new helpers. The two mailings resulted in 45 positive replies, which included 7 new people. I also asked in the mails if people wanted to remain on the list for future years, or to be taken off permanently. 23 people who were not able to help this year will volunteer in future years if available, several asked to be removed from the list, and 69 did not reply to either of my mailings. In addition, we were expecting a number of young people from the UniBrass organisation to be present on the Saturday morning, who could also help or shadow the committee to gain experience.

The number of bands who entered in section 2 this year was insufficient to allow it to run, which reduced the number of stewards required, and, as several of those volunteers who were available were prepared to do more than one shift, this proved to be enough to cover the whole day. Of course, life is not so simple! During the week before the Festival, we learnt that Julian Spilsbury had passed away, which meant a reorganisation of the announcers' rota, then on the day before the competition another announcer was taken ill and became unavailable. Two of the remaining announcers Adrian White and Mike Allcock were kind enough to extend their contribution to covering the whole day, (the other two announcers were already looking after a whole section) which meant that each section had the same announcer throughout.

My thanks go to all those who helped to steward the contest and make it a success.

Mike Pawson,
Festival secretary.

Youth Events

This last year there have been discussions around the youth involvement and the idea of a youth project within Wychavon Festival of Brass. These have ranged from an online competition to live workshops/contests, with pros and cons raised for both. Due to the time commitment and inconclusive project ideas we decided to advertise for another youth lead to take on the role and progress further. This is currently ongoing, and we hope to push this in the upcoming year.

Sarah Timms

Social Media Report

The year saw continued, and considerable, growth of our reach on Social Media platforms. We made much better use of Social Media on the day of the contest itself to engage with bands, spectators, supporters and those following the contest from afar.

Specifically:

Facebook: This was used again a great deal during the 2023 contest, to share news, updates, images and results to (potentially) 881700 people between 1st September to 1st January -- well up from 38809 people the year before! There were 32600 (up from 9775 in 2022) Facebook page visits in this period, of which 20800 (up from 7168 in 2022) were on the contest day itself. We now have 2370 likes to our Facebook page, of which 11% are outside the UK.

Our highest reach on a single post was the 1st section results on contest day, which had an organic reach of 787,500 people - yes really! Our next best was the 3rd section results had a very large reach too of 119,100 people! Our best post for engagement this year was again the Championship section results, with 680 reactions and 94 comments! 1st Section results had similar numbers for reactions and comments.

Twitter (now X): 867 followers, mostly bands and bands people. A sign-in issue means the last tweet was July 2023: 450-500 impressions per tweet/post until then. Previously, I only used Twitter/x to mirror the content from Facebook as it has a slightly different audience - being more organisation based. I have applied to have the page log-in back multiple times, but no joy as yet. Probably not worth worrying about, quite niche and shrinking as a Social network.

For the future: we should have an Instagram account - this would link to Facebook (owned by Meta too) and enable us to e.g. post photos live on the day (if feasible). It would work via the Meta Business suite which is used to post on Facebook and link the many photos we have/take. Fresh content for Instagram, for example contest day photos of bands during the year could keep engagement up year-round.

Oli Wilson

Wychavon Festival of Brass Treasurer's Report

Registered Charity 1167590

Statement of Financial Affairs

31 December 2023

Contest Account

	Notes	2023		2022		2021	
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Bank Balance 1 January		11,636.74		5039.37		5495.03	
<u>INCOME</u>							
Donations and Grants	1	7,025.00		11,650.00		6,552.00	
Ticket Sales		3,349.82		2,775.72		3670.00	
Exhibitors and Advertisers		365.00		900.00		1,340.00	
Friday Evening Concert		0.00		116.15		0.00	
Car Parking		956.40		0.00		0.00	
Other		0.00		140.00		0.00	
Advanced Payments		0.00	11,696.22	1,115.00	16,696.87	363.42	11,905.42
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>							
Contest Expenses	2	11,741.73		9,310.82		10,476.14	
Other Expenses	3	951.15		788.68		2,010.35	
Advanced Costs for 2024	4	50.00	12,742.88	0.00	10,039.61	0.00	12,486.49
Bank Balance 31 December		10,590.08		11,636.74		5,039.37	

Youth Project Account

	Notes	2023		2022		2021	
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Bank Balance 1 January		4,018.20		4,018.20		3,768.20	
<u>INCOME</u>							
Donations and Grants		0.00		0.00		250.00	4,018.20
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>							
Expenditure		0.00		0.00		0.00	

Bank Balance 31 December	4,018.20	4,018.20	4,018.20
--------------------------	----------	----------	----------

Notes to Statement of Financial Affairs 31 December 2023

			£	£
Note 1	Donations and Grants	Elmley Foundation	4,000.00	
		Evesham Town Council	1,520.00	
		Wychavon District Council	1,500.00	
		Misc.	5.00	<u>7,025.00</u>
Note 2	Contest Expenses	Carpets	450.70	
		Drapes	2,770.92	
		Adjudicators	1,841.95	
		Percussion Hire	4,146.60	
		Prizes	4,900.00	
		Trophies	1,217.25	
		Premises	1,500.00	
		Programmes	385.00	
		Paramedics	550.00	
		Advertising	480.00	
		Trailer	120.00	
		PRS Fees	126.25	
		Car Parking Expenses	300.00	
		Signage	1,012.85	
		Music Stands	585.00	
		Insurance	424.82	
		Wrist Bands	91.96	
		Other Contest		
		Expenditure	1,064.43	<u>21,967.73</u>
		Less Contest entry Fees		-10,226.00
				<u>11,741.73</u>
Note 3	Other Expenses	Website	160.00	
		Stationary	45.83	
		Gifts and Entertaining	462.72	
		Brass Band England		
		Membership	140.40	
		Safeguarding	130.00	
		Other	12.00	<u>951.15</u>
Note 4	Advanced Payments for 2024	Midland Medics	50.00	<u>50.00</u>

Treasurer's Report

The 2023 Wychavon Festival of Brass was a financial success. The committee's commitment to running a popular and exciting Entertainments Competition that remains highly attractive to brass bands across the United Kingdom and their friends and supporters ensured that income from band entries and ticket sales remained high. A new initiative for 2023 was that a charge was made for car parking on the school premises. Although this posed a challenge for the car park stewards and the local community this proved to be a significant additional source of income that should be pursued in coming years subject to a few logistical changes.

Grant Income in 2023 was reduced from 2022 but increased from 2021. In 2024 the committee will work with Brass Band England to secure greater levels of grant support as new plans for the organisation and administration of the festival are advanced.

The singularly largest investment in 2023 was the provision of a new marquee for the trader's village. This was financially a drain on the festival's resources. The marquee was supplied by Nigel Smith of the Fleece in lieu of his annual sponsorship fee (£1000) but heating and discounts for traders (designed to encourage their participation in this new set up) amounted to an investment of some £1,500.00. The new arrangements, however provided a new central hub for the festival and a better experience for traders at the heart of the refreshment area. This is an aspect of the festival that needs to be considered carefully in the coming financial year to try to make it at least self-funding.

The competition costs in 2023 were significantly greater than in 2022 and in 2021 but it should be recognised that this greater investment financed new storage facilities, improved signage, purchase of new music stands, and the changes to the trading area that will provide a long-term benefit to the festival and therefore amount to a wise and valuable investment by the committee.

At present the Wychavon Festival of Brass is well financed, prudently managed and has sufficient assets and expectation of grant funding to fully finance its activities in 2024 and beyond. The challenge for the festival is to maintain control of essential expenses. In 2024 the cost of premises, the hire of percussion and the provision of carpeting and drapes is expected to rise. The challenge for the committee is the making of prudent financial decisions that will enable the contest to grow and expand both in size and quality of experience whilst still making it financially attractive to the broad range of Brass Bands and supporters from all corners of the United Kingdom and beyond.

Iain Willis
Treasurer