

Stogursey Arts Trust annual report for 2021

The Stogursey Arts Trust has continued to support local artists, but mainly those who had been in contact throughout the year. Given the pandemic, the enquiries were far less than in previous years, but we have maintained and made available regular monthly information on the Arts via the local Stogursey News Magazine. Most enquiries were accompanied with questions as to how artists could exhibit and perform given the restrictions placed in response to the pandemic, such as our 'scaled down' annual Arts Festival, which ran from the 10th to the 17th of September this year.

The Arts Festival Committee took the decision to make compromises, given the uncertainties of the pandemic by restricting activities, reducing the numbers at performances and screenings and making more of the outside venues it had identified in 2020.

Despite the compromises, the Arts Trust still managed to enable support for contributing artists and performers during the Arts Festival week. We were fortunate to benefit from collaborations with other groups in the village and the fantastic support of the Trust's team of volunteers. For example; the local Parish Council got involved in the 'Lighting up Stogursey' project by putting up the Christmas lights early, encouraging other residents of the village and parish to do the same. The Stogursey Lunches created a special Somerset themed Festival Menu which they served in the Church Rooms venue, where the Trust had curated an exhibition of paintings by the late John Hilliard. The Stogursey Flower Show shared the opening date of the Festival, attracting a new audience to the events on offer and the Flower Arranging Group took on a traditional approach to making the Well Dressing this year.

The Flower Arranging Group, are an affiliated group to the Trust and this year they were able to recruit new volunteers whose expertise in Cumbrian Well Dressing will be invaluable in continuing this tradition for future years.

Residents also joined in making their front windows into 'pictures', as part of 'The Outside Galley', which offered a safe environment in which 'viewers' could circulate observing the legislated social distancing rules. We were fortunate to be offered a new large-scale work; 'The Weather Report' by the artist Alison Jacobs, which we displayed in the centre of the village above the old market square.

The programme of performances and live events supporting the Arts throughout the Festival week were made up of a broad range of contributions including: The Burnham & Highbridge Band (setting the scene with a visit to a Beer Keller and topped off with a rousing flag waving 'Last Night at the Proms' finale), The Stogursey 'Morris' Travellers who performed an 'unusual' version of traditional folk dances, Craft Spinning Demonstrations were available with Tea/Coffee and homemade cakes, a presentation with music and readings, linked to the theme of 'Wells and Water' was performed in St Andrews Church by Chris Moorsom (voice & violin) and Miles Quick (organ/keyboard - Director of music at St. Mary Magdalen church, Taunton). Chris Moorsom also put together a platform lecture titled 'Music in a Pandemic' (an hour of discussion and recordings of music created virtually during the lockdowns). Stogursey's Arts Trust's - Soap Factory Cinema ran a special 'themed evening' along with screening the film of the month, and the Arts Festival concluded with an Open Mic Night, where many local performers contributed to an entertaining evening of music and poetry.

Working on the success of teaming up with other active groups in the village and in response to given perceptions that communication in the parish had been fractured as a result of the pandemic; The Arts Trust facilitated a Coffee, Cake & Networking Event in the Autumn, with

the aim of sharing feedback and ideas for future collaborations and voluntary supporting events. Despite a successful attendance and over fifteen local groups participating, no one from these village organisations has yet to develop a strategy to take forward the findings from feedback compiled by the Arts Trust.

As the Arts Trust seeks to replace trustees who have left the area or resigned after long service, we also need to take stock and consider the Trust's future and the role it has adopted with respect to its aims and objectives. With the recent announcement ending the Covid regulations, we are intending to re activate our discussions, which were curtailed at the start of the pandemic.

Our key areas for exploration going forward are listed in the questions we have identified towards establishing a Strategic Action statement for 2022.

Stogursey Arts Trust: Key questions towards strategic action in 2022

Review and redefinition

Are the Trusts aims still valid or do they need updating/contextualising post pandemic? What have we learnt through running the Arts Festivals during restrictions and do we want the Arts Trust to look like in the future? Review our relationship with external relationships and partners.

Community involvement and Communications

How can we get more people involved/interested? New ideas and re vamping old ones that worked. How do we develop meaningful School links with teachers, pupils and parents? How do we want 'to be seen' in the community and wider social media? Does our existing Website do what we want it to and how should it look? What other methods of communication and marketing should/could we consider practically in reaching out or just providing information?

Our base assets, volunteers, equipment etc and affiliated 'Creatives Groups'

Resolutions to current operational and equipment problems? Working relationships with venues and the management of assets? Ideas and feasibility of offering support for additional Creatives Groups? Volunteers skills, contributory roles and questions relating to responsibilities and accountability? Shared resources, collaborations and interested groups?

Planning the framework of events and Fundraising

How will the Festival year look in the future? Working in conjunction with other groups how/who will establish an annual events calendar and implement it. Do we want a fixed or a fluid plan in moving forward? New ideas for events not already considered.

Fundraising, what is our strategy for future development? Mentoring support for other groups eg. grant application writing. The importance of networking, fundraising etc: who wants to help out with this? Succession planning?

Notes regarding strategy meetings

- *Strategy meetings will be held by sub groups, working to the headings above during Spring 2022.*
- *Meetings will be facilitated in the form of subgroups made up of lead trustees and other interested parties, to enable informal/creative discussion and to report back to the next formal meeting of the Stogursey Arts Trust*
- *Meetings will only have two topics for discussion and last no longer than an hour and a half.*
- *Notes from the sub group meetings will be circulated in advance of the next opportunity for a scheduled meeting of the Arts Trust. This meeting will formally consider the subgroup findings, agree identified action points and establish time scales for completion of tasks if this is appropriate.*
- *We will co-opt new members to support the actions to be taken as appropriate*
- *This exercise is finite and once the strategy group has completed this task it will be stood down.*

STOGURSEY ARTS FESTIVAL
Profit & Loss Year Ending January 2021

Revenue

Film Night	91	
Fairfield Trust	6,000	
Vintage teas	174	
Donations	65	6,330

Expenditure

Insurance	73	73
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Profit		6,257
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