

## **(Draft 2) Stogursey Arts Trust annual report for 2023-24**

Early challenges in 23-24 were resolved through the hard work of trustees and the year finished by celebrating ten successful years of the Arts in Stogursey with two festivals and some new ideas leading to fundraising events.

At the start of 2023-24 we experienced some costly technical problems with the equipment used by the Soap Factory Cinema. This popular community cinema had been running for seven years with no upgrades to equipment. The team of volunteers sought a replacement projector, but with limited contingent funds, the replacement was not ideal and technical difficulties continued, with poor sound quality. Over the course of the year key members of the Trust worked alongside the cinema team, looking at strategies to maintain the running costs. Over time it became clear that with out a significant outlay to update and replace equipment, the audience numbers, which had started to diminish, would not be able sustain the outgoings (from ticket sales) for film hire and licences. The future of the cinema is now under review, with a break in screening for three months at the start of 24-25.

To promote the past ten years of the Arts Festival and to illustrate what we had achieved to new comers to the village, we ran a retrospective slide show of past events to regenerate interest and encourage new members to take part. This turned out to be a timely strategy, as we had several resignations from the Trust including the Chair and the Secretary mid year. The retrospective event for the Chair, celebrated several years of voluntary service, having been with the Trust since it was formed and he decided it was time to stand down at allow others to take things forward. We were left with the task of initiating our action plan for succession, recruiting and introducing some new trustees at short notice. Our homework on seeking new volunteers for the vacant roles (Strategy Document 22-23) paid off, but there is still further work to do in helping the new officers get up to speed. We have been very fortunate in establishing a new treasurer in post, who has been a trustee for many years and continues to act as our licensee. This has been a huge help in stabilising the situation with the Cinema, but also, she along with other 'new' and established Trustees, has set up a very effective fund raising group, to establish contingent funding for Festival events going forward.

The new trustees bring valuable skills to complement the work of the Trust. We are now seeing a new look to publicity, community music skills and for the future; one of our groups is keen to introduce amateur dramatics. Through the strategy discussions (22-23), the Trust had established the need to look to change. With this new team, there is now renewed interest to develop positive ideas for the future, where these new members are taking ownership for areas such as planning and organisation to coordinate the contributions of the many creative groups around the village. Previously referred to as affiliated groups, these groups are better described as contributing Festival participants. This enables us to distinguish our strategic role and for them to maintain creative autonomy. In line with our ethos as a steering group for the Arts in the community, Trustees still provide mentoring support where requested, but we are also working on a better communication structure, to keep everyone in the loop and encourage wider participation (see ongoing strategy action ref the Festival Committee).

Our continued issues with the hanging system in the Church were resolved by focusing on exhibiting sculpture and freestanding textile panels. We worked with an artists' cooperative from Langport known as Hatch, and Festival participants: The Artisans, The Flower Group, the School and the Stogursey Arts Photographic Society as well as independent artists who approached us during the year. The Visual Arts continue to be curated by experienced members of the team, to ensure all work is presented and in doing so supportive of individual endeavour, demonstrating inclusivity and representing diversity through the creative outcomes. With a more comprehensive offer on the music programme this year, there was greater variety for audiences to choose from and it was noted that we had many more people

from across the village attending events. This outcome is indirectly supported by the work of the Music Director who started up new music workshop groups throughout the year. The example has seen other musicians following suit with their own unique contributions providing social regeneration opportunities in venues such as the local Pub. A ceramics workshop introduced this year by our local potter was a great success and saw many new faces attending. The workshop was well organised and there was a good atmosphere to enable individual creativity with a mix of on hand support and imaginative freedom. It was great to see younger people getting involved.

The year finished with The Christmas Tree Festival, coordinated by the former Chair of the Arts Trust and the former Secretary. There were more participants this year for this popular Festival event and the Tree Festival provided a brilliant festive backdrop for other programmed music events as well as the Church's, scheduled calendar services. There were fewer made/constructed trees than last year, but many participants had opted to 'make' their own decorations. It was again good to see increased numbers of younger contributors including the School and the Youth Club.

As we move into 2025 there is still some unfinished work to be planned following the Strategy Group's findings. General operational communications, the roles of new Trustees in relation to policy and induction, contingent fund raising and the conclusion of funded projects and new partnerships; are all part of our agenda going forward. We also need to build on the Festival's vision established ten years ago and promote the work of the newly established Village photographic archive through the use of new technology. This archive has the potential to represent the work of the Trust through the visual record of contributions by all Festival participating groups. With QR codes situated at various venues around the village, the ability for visitors to download images of past Festivals and events, will bring to life the best of what we have achieved so far.

## **Stogursey Arts Trust Strategic action ongoing for 2025**

### **An 'aid memoir'**

The findings from the 'strategy groups' were circulated to all Trustees in 2023, in a discussion paper: 'Strategic Action 2023 onwards'.

#### **Action**

Trust members who have not identified areas that they can contribute to, should review the action points and offer their expertise to initiate action identified.

## **The future of the Festival and events**

'There is a need for good ideas and creative direction, but you don't need fixed venues, you can work with pop up ones and be flexible'.

#### **Continued action**

H&S should be reviewed on all events and built into the initiation of activities: *project leaders to identify and do risk assessments using the SAT proforma*

#### **Action**

Identify and publish methods for communication: following discussions, *SE to rationalise elements of the discussion paper produced in 2024 and put together a revised operational communication methodology*

**Action**

Identify and publish project leaders for all events: *Project leaders report to the Trust via email*

**Continued action**

The Stogursey Arts Festival (SAF) Committee or a new form of communication/planning group needs to be convened and meet regularly. Meetings of this group in 2024 needed proper coordination and feedback. The objective of these meetings is to brainstorm ideas, agree themes and deadlines and establish an operational planning cycle, so projects can happen in good time: *Chair of SAF Committee/or Planning Coordinator and overseen by project leaders.*

**Continued action**

We should continue with our aims to recruit project participants, including volunteers, to create a critical mass of like-minded interest to support the Festival(s): *All trustees*

**Our identity, as noted in the constitution**

'The Trust is an enabling organisation, which links artists, performers, makers, crafts people, media and creative community groups'.

**Continued action**

As the Trust facilitates across all of the areas above, it needs to regularly remind itself, that it is a steering group for 'The Arts' in Stogursey: *A forum to discuss this maybe useful at an early stage in 2025. All trustees*

**Continued action**

The Trust needs to be clear on its definition of inclusivity through 'the Arts' locally: *A forum to discuss this maybe a useful reminder at an early stage in 2025. All trustees*

**Promoting our public image**

'To reset 'how we are seen' in the community and wider social media, we need to revisit our confidence in what we do, before we embark on promoting it'.

**Continued action**

Promote ourselves, by word of mouth, through collective discussion and through project activity, which has been seen to be a proven starting point: *A forum to discuss this maybe useful at an early stage in 2025. All trustees*

**Continued action**

Follow up on the QR code project, establish funds for implementation and begin the roll out of positioning these QR codes at/in the Festival venues, to establish an ongoing accessible, digital visual presence through the use of archive images, to convey that we are not just a once a year Festival: *Arts Director with SAPS*

**Outreach and knowledge support****Continued action**

Wider expertise needs to be sourced from organisations such as the Engine Room in Bridgwater, The Bridgwater Arts Centre (the funded partnership project with BAC is now live) and the 'Arts Forum' (to be convened): *Arts Director*

**Continued action**

Continue to develop meaningful School links with teachers, pupils and parents: *Trustees with established school links*

## **Resources & venues**

### **Continued action**

The Trust should seek new opportunities and negotiate community rates with heads of local venues (SE has already initiated funding support for local groups through the 'warm spaces' grant) : *Identified trustees*

### **Continued action**

Review the ongoing use of our demountable exhibition system in the Church with the Vicar and the PCC: *Arts Director*

### **Continued action**

Allocate contingency to repair the exhibition's digital projector. *Arts Director*

### **Continued action**

Review current viability issues of the Soap Factory Cinema and discuss appropriate action: *Chair and Trustees*

## **Funding, links and finance**

### **Action**

Complete outstanding work on Bank mandate and enable new signatories and online banking. *Chair and Treasurer*

### **Continued action (for information)**

Presentation of accounts should now follow a pro-forma, identifying individual ring fenced 'project' grant funds, money available through donations, individual group/society transactions (SAPS, Craft Group, Festival Committee, Soap Factory cinema etc.). *Chair and Treasurer*

### **Continued action**

Establish an annual plan for fund raising events: *The Fund raising committee*

### **Continued action**

Investigate potential networks available to the Trust, which we can consider working with in the future: *Arts Director*

## **Succession and planning**

'As members of the teams retire, leave and move on, we need strategies for Succession Planning and replacement'.

### **Continued action**

Recruit/encourage new volunteers as appropriate, to engage with the Festival and ascertain their interest to eventually take on some of the areas of responsibility, which become vacant. *Chair assisted by all trustees*

Having appointed new trustees in 2024 we will agree a time scale for completion of the strategic action tasks during 2025.

# STOGURSEY ARTS TRUST#

Profit & Loss year ending 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

## Revenue

Sales of paintings	925
Scarecrow	161
Tree Festival	157

Total income	1,242
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## Expenditure

Film Night	286
Insurance	81
Jubilee Rooms	114
Flower Festival	286
Artisans	83

Total	850
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PROFIT	392
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Sue Spicer  
Treasurer to Stogursey Arts Trust

