

MILTON KEYNES FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the Year Ending 30 June 2023

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Milton Keynes Festival of the Arts (The Festival) is an unincorporated Association registered with the Charity Commission (Registered Number 293601).

The Festival operates in accordance with a constitution dated June 1968. Under this constitution, the Trustees are the Officials for the time being, made up of a Chair, Vice Chair, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. Management of the Festival is vested in the General Committee consisting of the Officials together with other members all being elected annually at an Annual General Meeting.

Trustees

The trustees for the year under review have been:

Vice Presidents

Jocelyn Lord

Adrian Boynton

Co Chairs

Pat Haig

Kerry Bright (resigned chair Jan 2024)

Honorary Secretary

Janice Hughes

Honorary Treasurer

Christine Taylor FCA

Music and Drama

Alistair Haig

Emily Haig

Dance

Adam Scott Lewis

Eloise Ferry

Kerry Bright

Keeley Robertson

Keeva Buckley (appointed Jan 2024)

Sharon Hart (resigned Jan 2024)

Trustees are generally appointed from volunteers who have experience in the Festival movement. Briefing is provided by the section heads in their duties and they are given training in the Festival's child protection policies.

Affiliation

The Festival is a member festival of the British and International Federation of Festivals.

Auditors

Formal audit is not required by virtue of the limited financial turnover. Independent examination of the financial accounts is carried out by:

Andrew Paul ACA

15 Parsons Close,

Church Crookham,

Fleet, Hampshire, GU52 6HL

Bankers

Charities Aid Foundation,
25 Kings Hill,
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

National Westminster Bank,
501 Silbury Boulevard,
Saxon Gate East
Milton Keynes
MK9 3ER

AIMS OF THE ORGANISATION

The object of the festival, as set out in the constitution, is to advance the education of the public in the Arts and in particular the Arts of Music, Speech and Drama, and Dance in all their branches.

In furtherance of its objects it has powers to:

- 1 hold or promote annual competitive festivals;
- 2 present and promote public performances, concerts and recitals;
- 3 affiliate to the British and International Federation of Festivals and to further the objects of that Federation.

OBJECTIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Festival takes place each year between February and March and consists of three separate section events, Dance, Music, and Speech and Drama in pursuit of the charity's educational objective. The Festival is primarily structured around the needs of children and young people who account for over 90% of its entrants. It aims to develop an audience and support for the performing arts by encouraging parents, friends and the public to attend at its events. In addition, it may offer a number of classes for adult, amateur performers of any age.

The Festival may present workshops, to assist artistic development, and concerts, which severally promote the festival, give entrants a more structured performance opportunity and act as a showcase for their talents.

Within this structure, the committee seeks to provide an environment for performers which is supportive, encouraging, does not expose them to feelings of failure and, insofar as the festival is competitive, has rules necessary to ensure fairness and applies them.

Opportunities for young people to by perform in public can be very limited. Artistic development cannot be fully satisfied only by taking examinations.

COVID-19

In 2021 the Festival world was heavily impacted by the virus and government guidelines on social distancing in the world of performance events.

For 2022 and 2023 we were delighted to be able to return to a more normal offering.

FINANCIAL RESULTS

Income was strong in most sections in 2023, apart from the Speech and Drama section where entries were down. Costs did increase across the board, however, resulting in a small loss overall.

Catering costs increased substantially in all sections. The provision of reasonable catering is essential, given the long days worked by adjudicators and volunteers. In 2023 less of the offering was provided by volunteers and more bought in from a professional caterer.

Our use of technology was also updated. In Dance in 2023 we invested in an on-line entry system provided by All England Dance, which offers the ability not only to manage entries but also to co-ordinate timetables and play music for the individual performances. In a qualifying year this will also mean that the clerical task of co-ordinating qualification information is removed. The system is paid for by a three-year licence fee (£850) and a levy per performance (£1,214).

We also invested in SumUp card machines this year for use in the Dance section, which had the unintentional side effect of encouraging the purchase by parents of lanyards for solo dancers and of lanyards and medals for groups which are placed, which we do not provide for free.

In this year representatives attended the BIFF National Conference in person, resulting in additional costs. In the previous period an on-line conference meant that there were limited costs involved.

RESERVES AND PUBLIC BENEFIT

Our reserves remain healthy. Venues and adjudicators all have to be booked in advance and expect to be paid even if an event has to be cancelled. The reserves at the balance sheet date would enable us to meet these costs without any income arising. The Music section also needs to be able to cover the cost of piano hire and tuning if we were to lose our major sponsor, Kawai UK Ltd.

The Trustees are confident that sufficient reserves have been built up to enable them to meet any costs or lost revenue that may arise from a hiatus in their events.

In 2023 we again applied for and received the Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) which obviates the need for individual child licences in all three sections.

The committee has considered the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on the provision of public benefit. Charity law requires the use of the Festival's funds to further the charitable objectives of the festival to be considered by the trustees each year. The Committee will continue each year to consider how best to use these surplus funds to achieve the charity's objective in the future.

In the Dance section we charge lower entry fees for the Platform section (appropriate for school children wanting professional adjudication for their examination portfolios and for dancers who have not entered a festival before) to make this section more accessible to a wider range of performers. We are also actively seeking to involve other sections of the community, including local Indian dance schools.

We also decided to increase our place medals to the first four places. This increased our medal costs, (which were already high since we had used up our existing stocks) but did mean that a number of entrants who in past years would have ended outside the medal placings were able to take away a more significant souvenir, which we felt to be a good use of our charitable funds.

In our 50th anniversary year we embarked on the provision of Bursaries intended to provide opportunities for talented performers to further develop their skills. We continued to provide this in the Dance section in 2023 and our adjudicator nominated Hannah Digby to receive the award, which was paid in October 2023, after our period end, when she began studying at Laine Theatre Arts.

In the Music section a small bursary was awarded to one of the piano competitors to fund entry to a national piano competition.

We put funds aside in the Choirs section, to provide bursaries for state schools for which the cost of transport to a festival venue can be prohibitive, although there were no applications for this support.

RISK POLICY

The principal risks affecting the festival centre around the need to provide a safe environment for our young participants to perform in, and the financial threat to an organisation which has always been self-funding. An annual risk assessment is carried out using the model provided by our umbrella organisation the British and International Federation of Festivals (BIFF). The financial risks have been dealt with above.

Our child protection policy is revisited in each financial year, following the guidelines developed by our umbrella organisation, and administered by the Honorary Secretary, Janice Hughes. Our policy is published on our website and in all syllabi and programmes issued by the Festival.

In addition to our general obligations to meet child protection standards the awards of Body of Persons Approval by Milton Keynes Council will depend on our continuing to meet those standards.

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as a Festival, we are required to ensure processes are in place to ensure that all the personal data which we handle regularly through entry forms, volunteer details and sponsor or donor information are safeguarded. Names, addresses, dates of birth, email addresses are all personal data which processed as part of festival planning. Under the legislation we are required handle such data with care, and retain it only insofar as it is required for the purposes for which it is collected and that all subjects are aware of the data we hold and have the opportunity to request its deletion.

SECTION REPORTS

Dance Report

2023 was not an All England year, but there has been a significant change to AED qualifying dances – additional small groups, open sections, separate lyrical sections, etc so entries reflected this. We also have a growing interest from Asian dance schools, where the entry numbers are increasing each year. Total entry income was therefore very healthy and box office money reflected this too.

There was no separate Dance Gala event in 2023. A smaller Gala is held as part of the main event so this generates no additional income / costs.

Music, Ensembles and Choirs

Our 2023 festival was our 55th celebratory event and we were thrilled to have a very healthy increase in the number of performers taking part in our music section, particularly in the Piano section. Feedback from parents, teachers and performers was very positive as always.

Following our soloists' weekend seven of our talented music festival performers were invited back to take part in our virtual Milton Keynes Young Musician of the Year showcase and we were delighted to welcome Gill Johnston and Martin Wakely to provide constructive feedback and encouragement to what was an impressive programme. The judges were unanimous in their decisions and highly complimentary about each performers' playing. Each performer was presented with a finalists' trophy, a small amount of prize money and certificate and the impressive piano and cello performance of Matias Yung was rewarded with the title of Milton Keynes Young Musician of the Year 2023. Second place went to Tham Luanghvisut, saxophonist, and third place went to talented pianist Rebecca Bazlov.

Drama

Our Drama section, also held at Walton High School, is a 2 day event. For Drama we use two rooms (including stage and auditorium on Sunday). Entries in 2023 were unfortunately down, affecting both entry fees and door money. Programme sales were also down – an outline programme was available on-line and not everyone wanted a hard copy.

PUBLICITY

The website is kept up to date and we appear on Twitter and two Facebook pages which are used to promote the festival and advise entrants of any news or impending closing dates.

All section organisers look out for new prospective entrants / drama schools / community choirs to approach about the festival. Over 200 syllabuses are sent out by mail to prospective Music and Drama entries and in addition section leaders message them via their social networking platform / email.

Thanks and Acknowledgements.

We are privileged to have the continued sponsorship by Kawai Pianos who donate several of their beautiful concert grand and upright pianos to our music festival for our performers' use and we are grateful for their generous support and for also agreeing to extend their patronage to the Milton Keynes Young Musician of the Year competition. Without their ongoing support the festival would not be able to accept as many piano entrants as we do (over 400 performances in 2023) so we are ever grateful for their kindness and generosity and to their Milton Keynes retail partner, Bonners Music. Kawai have agreed to continue their support in 2024.

We are greatly indebted to members of the general and section committees who support the festival by their work throughout the year. In addition, we enjoy the support of a number of

volunteers who help with the actual festival events; their help is always needed and very much appreciated.

Finally, we are most grateful to the management, staff and volunteers of The Venue at Walton High School for their help over the last few years and for their assistance with arrangements for the festival events.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Milton Keynes Festival of the Arts

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 30 June 2023 which are set out on pages 8 to 11.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



*Andrew Paul ACA
15 Parsons Close,
Church Crookham,
Fleet,
Hampshire, GU52 6HL*

29 April 2024

Milton Keynes Festival of the Arts

Receipts and Payments for the period ending 30 June 2023

	2022 - 2023	2021 - 2022
Incoming Resources		
Festival Sections		
Festival Entries	20,065	16,330
Box Office - Admissions	11,300	11,773
Programme Sales	1,250	2,185
Other Income	2,680	1,795
Note 1	<u>35,295</u>	<u>32,083</u>
Other Income	<u>40</u>	
Note 2	<u>40</u>	<u>166</u>
Total income	<u>35,335</u>	<u>32,249</u>
Resources Expended		
Festival sections		
Adjudicators fees and expense	10,233	10,175
Hire of halls and equipment	11,687	11,634
Medals and Prizes	3,606	1,199
Syllabus and Programme printing	1,960	1,226
Catering costs	4,896	1,836
Licence and copyright fees	3,007	454
Note 1	<u>35,389</u>	<u>26,524</u>
General costs		
Annual General Meeting & Expenses	521	-
Bank Charges	96	96
BIFF Conference fees	570	0
BIFF costs	290	290
Other Admin costs	482	139
Note 3	<u>1,959</u>	<u>525</u>
Total resources expended	<u>37,348</u>	<u>27,049</u>
Operating (deficit) / surplus for the year	£(2,013)	£5,200
Young Musician of the Year net costs	559	329
Dance Gala costs	-	1,396
	<u>(559)</u>	<u>(1,725)</u>
	(2,572)	3,475
Anniversary Fund:		
Dance Bursaries	500	500
Music Bursaries	55	-
Note 4	<u>(555)</u>	<u>(500)</u>
(Deficit) / Surplus for the year	(3,127)	2,975
Opening funds	36,004	33,029
Closing Funds	<u>£32,877</u>	<u>£36,004</u>

Milton Keynes Festival of the Arts

Funds Available for the period ending 30 June 2023

	2022 - 2023	2021 - 2022
NatWest Current	25,810	32,071
CAF Cash	2,388	1,503
CAF Gold	4,679	2,430
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Unrestricted Funds	£32,877	£36,004

Note 1 Section Surpluses and Deficits

	Dance		Music	Drama	Music & Drama		Choir / Ensembles	Total		
	2022 - 23	2022	2022 - 23	2022 - 23	2023	2022	2022 - 23	2022	2022 - 23	2022
Incoming Resources										
Festival Sections										
Festival Entries	11,372	9,661	5,763	2,228	7,991	5,864	702	805	20,065	16,330
Box Office - Admissions	7,797	7,315	1,271	1,537	2,808	3,597	695	861	11,300	11,773
Programme Sales	1,000	1,005	200	50	250	110	0	80	1,250	2,185
Other Income	2,452	1,434	194	34	228	360	0	0	2,680	1,794
	22,621	19,415	7,428	3,849	11,277	10,921	1,397	1,746	35,295	32,082
Resources Expended										
Festival sections										
Adjudicators costs	3,754	3,436	4,703	1,437	6,140	6,247	339	492	10,233	10,175
Hire of halls and equipment	7,659	7,623	2,778	1,016	3,794	3,297	234	714	11,687	11,634
Medals and Prizes	2,377	182	1,144	0	1,144	953	85	64	3,606	1,199
Syllabus and Programme	1,511	0	378	71	449	352	0	43	1,960	1,225
Catering costs	2,273	1,077	2,033	590	2,623	585	0	174	4,896	1,836
Licence and copyright fees	2,215	237	656	121	777	210	15	7	3,007	454
	19,789	13,385	11,692	3,235	14,927	11,644	673	1,494	35,389	26,523
Section (Deficit) / Surplus	2,832	6,030	(4,264)	614	(3,650)	-723	724	252	(94)	5,559
General income									(40)	(166)
General costs									1,959	815
YMOY									559	329
Dance Gala										1,396
Revenue Bursaries									555	500
(Net costs)									(3,033)	(2,750)
(Deficit) / Surplus for period									£(3,127)	£2,975

Note 2**General Income:**

	2023	2022
Bank interest	40	6
Dbase refund	-	160
	<u>40</u>	<u>£166</u>

Note 3**General Costs:**

	2023	2022
Bank charges	96	96
General non-attributable costs	-	139
SumUp Cash readers	482	-
Insurance	290	290
Conference fees	570	-
Other costs	521	-
Total non-section costs	<u>£1,959</u>	<u>£525</u>

Gala net costs

	2023	2022
Young Musician of the Year	559	329
Dance Gala	-	1,396
	<u>£559</u>	<u>£1,725</u>

The Young Musician of the Year event is held every year to celebrate outstanding performances from soloists in our Music festival.

The Gala Dance event was a one-off event held at the beginning of the previous period to celebrate the winners of the on-line solo dance sections and to give regular participants who were going on to further education a last chance to perform on the stage at Walton High.

No performers fees were charged for either event and the costs of both are reflected in the appropriate financial statements.

Note 4**Bursaries**

The Festival regularly puts aside funds for bursaries intended to benefit talented performers in Dance and Music.

Funds were again set aside from reserves for a £500 bursary for a dancer going on to study full time in the Autumn. (See Trustee report page 4.) A small bursary was paid in the Music section, to enable a participant from 2022 to enter a national piano competition.

Actual payments in 2023 (2022) were as follows

	2023	2022
2022 Piano Bursary	55	-
2021 / 2022 dance bursaries	500	500
	<u>£555</u>	<u>£500</u>