

# MILTON KEYNES FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

## ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the Year Ending 30 June 2024

### 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 Jan 2024)

##### Honorary Secretary

Janice Hughes

##### Honorary Treasurer

Christine Taylor FCA

##### Music and Drama

Alistair Haig

Emily Haig (resigned November 2024)

Gina Sharp (app'd November 2024)

Michelle Okowa (app'd November 2024)

Michael Guy (app'd November 2024)

Adrian Ho (app'd November 2024)

Isabelle de Sousa (app'd November 2024)

##### Dance

Adam Scott Lewis

Eloise Ferry

Kerry Bright (resigned November 2024)

Keeley Robertson

Keeva Buckley (appointed Jan 2024)

Sharon Hart (resigned Jan 2024)

Claire Wilson (app'd November 2024)

Nick Harper (app'd November 2024)

Leanne Hughes (app'd November 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. The Dance section is also a qualifying event for the All England Dance competition, and regularly sponsors dancers to compete in the UK Young dancer competition.

## **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.

## **FINANCIAL RESULTS**

Income was strong in most sections, dance was helped by the AED qualification cycle, and a number of new local Asian dance schools. A profit was made overall.

Catering continues to increase in all sections. The provision of reasonable catering is essential, given the long days worked by adjudicators and volunteers. In 2024 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 also means 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 (2024 £1,354, 2023 £1,214).

All sections now have use of SumUp card machines. These enable audience members to pay for tickets and other purchases electronically. This has had the unintentional side effect of encouraging more audience members to enter the auditorium, increasing footfall in the Music and Drama audiences, and of facilitating 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.

## **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 2024 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.

Dance has recently increased our place medals to the first four places. This differs from many Federation festivals, but does 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. This is popular with participants, and we feel it to be a good use of our charitable funds.

We provide an annual Bursary intended to provide opportunities for talented performers to further develop their skills. We continued to provide this in the Dance section in 2024 and our adjudicator nominated Lili Sky Howe to receive the award, which was paid in October 2024, after our period end, when she began studying at Laine Theatre Arts. In 2024 we also made the decision to award bursaries to four dancers enabling them to enter the All England Dance Young Dancer award. All four dancers made it through the audition stage to the knock out round and two, Lexi Comerford of Oncore Dance Academy and Malakai Mobbs of Dexterity Dance appeared in the final held at the Royal Opera House.

In the Drama section a small prize was awarded to an outstanding entry to the Drama section.

## **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**

2024 was an All England year, but as we are already operating near capacity we are obliged to limit new schools to those based in the Milton Keynes area. We 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.

A smaller Gala is held as part of the main event so this generates no additional income / costs.

## **Music, Ensembles, Choirs & Drama sections**

Our 2024 festival was our 56th annual festival event and we were thrilled to have a wonderful number of performers taking part and feedback from adjudicators, parents, teachers and performers was very positive, as always. Numbers were up across the board, (1268 performances overall, 2023 – 1156), but we were particularly pleased with the large, increasing, entry in our piano sections, 493 performance in 2024, following an already healthy 439 in 2023.

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 Nadia Hinson and concert pianist / teacher Craig Greene to provide constructive feedback.

The winner chosen was pianist Waika Hagan Chu who played a most impressive performance of the Chopin Nocturne Op 15 No 1 and Piazzolla – Suite para Piano Op 2 with Reeka Chanelle Manglicmot - piano and violin in second place and violinist Sean Lau in third place.

The other highly accomplished finalists were Matias Yung - piano and cello, Mason Huo - piano, Evie Cooper - violin and Yiding Wang - piano. Fabulous guest performances were provided by Milton Keynes Young Singer of the Year 2024 Hope Dionisio-Sagau and adult festival entrant, pianist Vicky Letsman added an extra level of entertainment to the event, which was hosted by Festival Vice President Mr Adrian Boynton.

Our 2024 event was the final year that Pat Haig and her support team, husband Alistair and daughter Emily, presided over the organisation of our Drama and Music events, although Pat retains her role as Chairman of the Festival. It is a measure of Pat's contribution over the years that on her retirement 5 additional organisers have been recruited to fulfil her role!

Pat has spent considerable effort in recruiting, training and supporting the replacement team. Whilst they will all assist across the sections their individual roles will be: Michael Guy – Instrumental and Young Musician of the year, Adrian Ho – Piano, Isabelle de Sousa - Drama and Ensembles and Choir day Gina Sharp - Festival Admin and Reception and Michelle Okowa - cross section support and catering. We look forward to working with them in 2025.

## **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, 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 2025.

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 years and for their assistance with arrangements for the festival events.

**Christine Taylor**  
**Treasurer**

**Patricia Haig**  
**Chair**

## **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 2024 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*

*20 April 2025*

# Milton Keynes Festival of the Arts

## Receipts and Payments for the period ending 30 June 2024

	2023 - 2024	2022 - 2023
<b>Incoming Resources</b>		
<b>Festival Sections</b>		
Festival Entries	24,234	20,065
Box Office - Admissions	13,809	11,300
Programme Sales	1,140	1,250
Other Income	2,070	2,680
<b>Note 1</b>	<u>41,253</u>	<u>35,295</u>
<b>Other Income</b>		
<b>Note 2</b>	<u>131</u>	<u>40</u>
<b>Total income</b>	<u><b>41,384</b></u>	<u><b>35,335</b></u>
<b>Resources Expended</b>		
<b>Festival sections</b>		
Adjudicators fees and expense	13,069	10,233
Hire of halls and equipment	11,122	11,687
Medals and Prizes	3,893	3,606
Syllabus and Programme printing	1,463	1,960
Catering costs	4,153	4,896
Licence and copyright fees	1,880	3,007
<b>Note 1</b>	<u>0</u>	<u>35,389</u>
<b>General costs</b>		
Annual General Meeting & Expenses		521
Bank Charges	55	96
BIFF Conference fees	380	570
BIFF costs	768	290
Other Admin costs	329	482
<b>Note 3</b>	<u>1,532</u>	<u>1,959</u>
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<u><b>37,112</b></u>	<u><b>37,348</b></u>
<b>Operating (deficit) / surplus for the year</b>	<b>£4,272</b>	<b>£(2,013)</b>
Young Musician of the Year net costs	621	559
	<u><b>3,651</b></u>	<u><b>(2,572)</b></u>
<b>Anniversary Fund:</b>		
<b>Dance Bursaries</b>	760	500
<b>Music Bursaries &amp; Prizes</b>	450	55
<b>Note 4</b>	<u>1,210</u>	<u>(555)</u>
<b>(Deficit) / Surplus for the year</b>	<b>2,441</b>	<b>(3,127)</b>
<b>Opening funds</b>	32,877	36,004
<b>Closing Funds</b>	<u><u><b>£35,318</b></u></u>	<u><u><b>£32,877</b></u></u>



## Milton Keynes Festival of the Arts

### Funds Available for the period ending 30 June 2024

	2023 - 2024	2022 - 2023
<b>Bank Balances</b>		
<b>NatWest Current</b>	25,255	25,810
<b>CAF Cash</b>	5,268	2,388
<b>CAF Gold</b>	<u>4,795</u>	<u>4,679</u>
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<u><b>£35,318</b></u>	<u><b>£32,877</b></u>

**Christine Taylor**  
**Treasurer**

**Note 1 Section Surpluses and Deficits**

	Dance		Music	Drama	Music & Drama		Choir / Ensembles		Total	
	2023 - 24	2023	2023 - 24	2023 - 24	2024	2023	2023 - 24	2023	2023 - 24	2023
<b>Incoming Resources</b>										
<b>Festival Sections</b>										
Festival Entries	13,272	11,372	7,771	2,405	10,716	7,991	786	702	24,234	20,065
Box Office - Admissions	9,612	7,797	1,179	1,590	2,769	2,808	1,428	695	13,809	11,300
Programme Sales	1,140	1,000				250			1,140	1,250
Other Income	2,070	2,452				228			2,070	2,680
	26,094	22,621	8,950	3,995	12,945	11,277	2,214	1,397	41,253	35,295
<b>Resources Expended</b>										
<b>Festival sections</b>										
Adjudicators costs	4,072	3,754	6,831	1,619	8,450	6,140	547	339	13,069	10,233
Hire of halls and equipment	7,775	7,659	2,084	850	2,934	3,794	413	234	11,122	11,687
Medals and Prizes	2,312	2,377	1,581		1,581	1,144		85	3,893	3,606
Syllabus and Programme	1,259	1,511	204		204	449		0	1,463	1,960
Catering costs	2,563	2,273	1,192	204	1,396	2,623	194	0	4,153	4,896
Licence and copyright fees	1,354	2,215	526		526	777		15	1,880	3,007
	19,335	19,789	12,418	2,673	15,091	14,927	1,154	673	35,580	35,389
Section (Deficit) / Surplus	6,759	2,832	(3,468)	1,322	(2,146)	(3,650)	1,060	724	5,673	(94)
General income									(131)	(40)
General costs									1,532	1,959
YMOY									621	555
Revenue Bursaries									1,210	559
(Net costs)									(3,232)	(3,033)
<b>(Deficit) / Surplus for period</b>									<b>£2,441</b>	<b>£(3,127)</b>

**Note 2****General Income:**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Bank interest	131	40
	<u>131</u>	<u>40</u>

**Note 3****General Costs:**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Bank charges	55	96
General non-attributable costs	418	-
SumUp Cash readers	-	482
Insurance	350	290
Conference fees	380	570
Other costs	329	521
<b>Total non-section costs</b>	<u>£1,532</u>	<u>£1,959</u>

**Gala net costs**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Young Musician of the Year	621	559
	-	-
	<u>£621</u>	<u>£559</u>

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

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

**Note 4****Bursaries and prizes**

The Festival regularly puts aside funds for bursaries intended to benefit talented performers in the Dance, Music and Speech sections of the Festival.

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.) Bursaries were also awarded to fund four dancers to enter the UKYD national dance competition. A prize was also awarded to a performer from the Speech section of the festival and to performers in the YMoY.

Actual payments in 2024 (2023) were as follows

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
2024 YMoY awards	225	-
2024 Music & Vocal prizes	75	55
2024UK Young dancer of the Year	410	-
2023 dance bursaries	500	500
	<u>£1,210</u>	<u>£555</u>