

Chair's report 2024

This was the first return to a full festival since before Covid-19 and all sections demonstrated healthy numbers, particularly dance, which was over-subscribed.

The venue for Dance and Music was Ipswich High School and, although the school is an excellent venue for Dance in many ways, it was not suitable for Music. The free drinks and food for volunteers were well-received, but the lack of vegetarian options meant several trips to a (not very nearby) supermarket. Also, the lack of a separate space and toilet for the adjudicator was a drawback. Feedback from the Dance Schools was overwhelmingly positive, although there were a few minor complaints.

The Prep School Hall was cold, although we had been promised heating, and the piano was not suitable for the more advanced candidates. The lengthy adjudication notes meant the day was drawn out unnecessarily, although there were some outstanding performances from some instrumentalists. The excellent number of entries meant having to find an extra adjudicator and, therefore, an extra room. Again, there were a few complaints, mainly about the quality of the piano and the over-running.

Kesgrave Community Centre hosted two days of Speech and Drama and is a very good venue for the spoken word. There were several outstanding performances, and the adjudicator gave informative and well-received feedback.

Sarah and Sharon ensured that all paperwork was completed for the licencing and all volunteers now have a DBS or chaperone licence. This was a huge task, and I am very grateful to them for pushing forward with this. Sarah also ensured that enough chaperones were available throughout the entire festival.

The festival sold programmes and lanyards this year and the Treasurer's report will give more detail about this.

As always, I am humbled by the amount of time and goodwill the volunteers put into the festival and am grateful for their selflessness which means we can keep offering performance opportunities throughout the county.

I am saddened to hear that Sarah, Andy and Sharon are stepping down from the committee and would like to thank them for the immense hard work they have put into the festival over the past few years.